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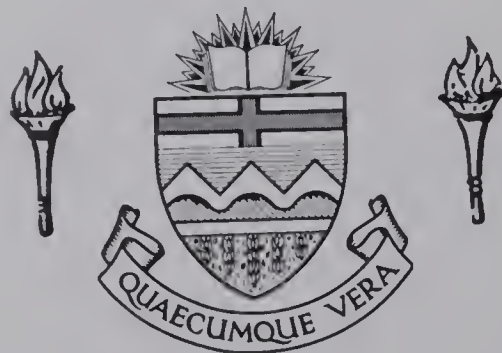
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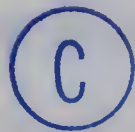
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POUND AND VORTICISM

by



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A THESIS

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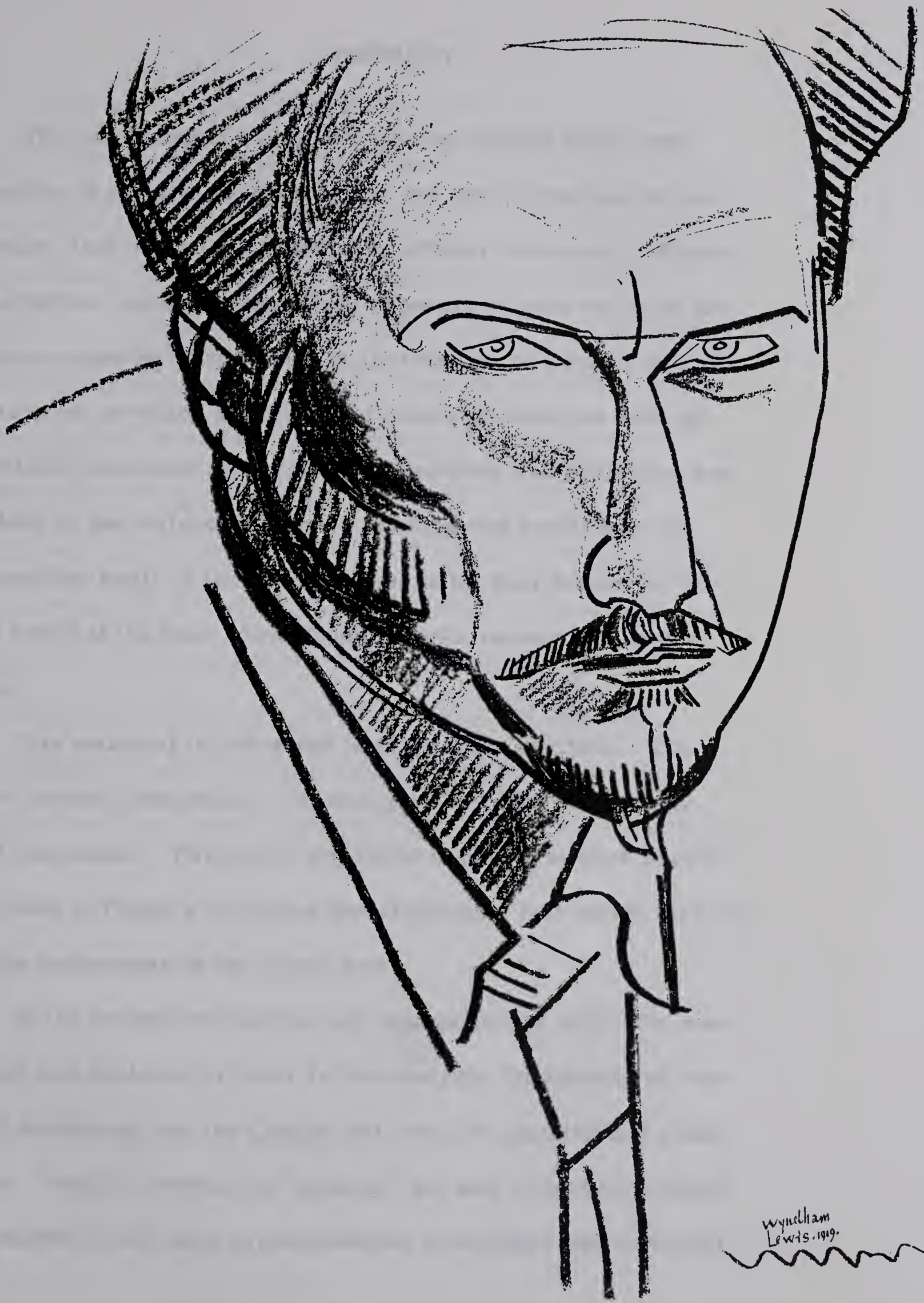


UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA  
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled Pound and Vorticism, submitted by Elizabeth Bruce in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.







Wyndham Lewis. Portrait of Pound.





## ABSTRACT

This study began with a recognition that the theory and practice of the pre-first world war art movements and in particular, that of Wyndham Lewis's vorticist movement, afforded an effective point of entry for an exposure of both the unity and contemporaneity of the conceptual structure of Pound's poetry. This study provides a history of Pound's association with the vorticist movement and relates assumptions and principles embedded in the texture of Pound's thinking and practice to the conceptual basis of the modern movements that dominated the art world at the time when Pound's poetic career was beginning.

The material is presented in three main sections. The first section comprises a chronological account of the vorticist movement. Particular emphasis is placed at each period on those of Pound's activities and statements that relate directly to the movements in the visual arts.

In the second section the key configurations within the material are explored in order to demonstrate the identity of concept informing both the Cantos and vorticist painting and sculpture. Pound's interest in "musical" art and in artistic volition is related to the main preoccupations of abstract expressionism.



The cubist analytic procedure and Pound's search for the primary poetic elements are seen as manifestations of a culture in the process of turning itself inside out. The modification of expressionist theory in order to introduce an element of reciprocity between the artistic volition and the artists' material that is apparent in the theory and practice of the vorticists is briefly explored. The nature of the new structural model exemplified in the Cantos and in the contemporary visual arts is examined. Attention is drawn to the repetition of the pattern of the vortex in all of Pound's concepts and in many of the statements of other modern artists.

The final section consists of a selection of vorticist documents that are not readily obtainable and a collection of illustrations of some of the vorticist painting and sculpture.



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## PREFACE

One of the striking features of the modern movement in the arts in the years immediately preceding and following the first world war was the self-conscious association of writers and artists. Not only were most writers attached to particular movements in the visual arts, but many painters, sculptors, and architects at this time felt impelled to describe and defend their art in writing, some of them moving from the writing of art manifestoes into both traditional and experimental literary forms. Georges Lemaître in From Cubism to Surrealism in French Literature notes that there can be

no question. . . of arbitrarily dissociating modern literature and modern art. These two aspects of our culture have been for many years, and are at the present moment, almost inextricably interwoven. Every change in one domain is inevitably accompanied by correlated transformations in the other.<sup>1</sup>

This study is concerned with one particular instance of this interrelationship of literature and the visual arts--the association of Pound with the painters and sculptors who formed the short-lived vorticist group in the months immediately preceding the first world war.



Vorticism provides a particularly interesting example of a movement in which the writer and artist were closely connected. When vorticism first took shape as a movement, it was primarily a movement in painting, with the sculptor Gaudier-Brzeska as an enthusiastic supporter and participant and Jacob Epstein as an ally, briefly associated with the movement. Although Eliot, Richard Aldington, T. E. Hulme and Ford Madox Ford were connected with this movement in varying degrees, Pound is the only member of the group in William Roberts' imaginative reconstruction of the "Vorticists at the Restaurant Tour Eiffel" who is not a painter. But Wyndham Lewis, who presided over the movement, had published a series of short stories in 1909 and 1910 before he had acquired a reputation as a painter, and, in addition to contributing the bulk of the manifestoes and polemical articles to the two issues of the movement's periodical Blast, provided a play, Enemy of the Stars, which, as Pound notes, was a radio drama which materialized before the radio.<sup>2</sup> Pound provided the title for the movement, a manifesto, and some poetry, mainly of a polemical nature, for Blast, and came away from his association with this movement with a great deal--not only with a sense of excitement at the new visual world he saw in the works of the vorticists,<sup>3</sup> a feeling he has described





on several occasions of having been given new eyes, but also with some clues relating to "the midwifery required, to get out of the nineteen hundred and eight,"<sup>4</sup> information which was to become a part of his attempt to plot some of the coordinates of the new modes of perception in the Cantos. While all the individual elements that Pound brought together in his outline of a vorticist aesthetic in Gaudier-Brzeska are present in isolated statements in his earlier writings, the visual arts, both the works themselves and the theory underlying them, provided for Pound an external referent and possibly the catalyst by means of which the various components of his poetic world came together.

Not only were literature and painting intimately connected in the vorticist movement, but vorticism differs from many of the other early modernist groups in terms of the relative importance the two media came to assume within the movement. The impact on the visual arts of vorticism's closest relative and parent, cubism, has been so pronounced that attendant writers have been swallowed in the wake of its revolutionary effect. Guillaume Apollinaire and Max Jacob remain shadowy figures beside the gargantuan Picasso. Vorticism, on the other hand, as a movement in painting consumed itself in 1914, and



became transformed into what was mainly a literary movement-- the group Lewis later termed "the men of 1914"--Joyce, Pound, Eliot, and Lewis.

The general facts of Pound's adherence to vorticism are well-known and the importance of this relation has been noted. Clark Emery, in Ideas into Action observes that "the Cantos have been shaped and colored by his tour of duty with the Vorticists."<sup>5</sup> Hugh Kenner, who, like Emery, sees Pound's association with the vorticist movement as an important one, has briefly described in his critical study, The Poetry of Ezra Pound, what he considers to be the nature of this association:

The Vortex, besides its emphasis. . . on the moving (dynamic; dramatic) image, lent itself at Pound's hands to the ethical and metaphysical implications which were only consolidated with his Chinese studies at a later period. By 1916, with the republication of the long exposition of Vorticist aesthetic in Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir, the whole of Pound is present in embryo.<sup>6</sup>

The aim of this study is to plot the history of Pound's association with this movement and to place certain basic concepts which act as landmarks in Pound's "periplum"<sup>7</sup> within the context of the theory and practice of the visual arts movement with which he was closely associated, and since vorticism was not in any sense divorced from its environment, that of the other





art movements that were its immediate contemporaries. The title of the movement Pound provided, and the idea of the vortex originates from a complex of Pound's interests that to a great extent pre-date the movement itself. The concept of the vortex, with reference to some of Pound's main interests, is briefly considered. Some characteristic vorticist documents that are not readily available are appended.



## PART ONE

### THE VORTICIST MOVEMENT



## I

Vorticism assumed the contours of a specific movement in an art world dominated by nineteenth century styles, in particular an English version of impressionism, at a time when this dominance was being shaken. Through Roger Fry's two Post-Impressionist Exhibitions in 1910 and 1912 and the futurist Marinetti's periodic assaults on London from 1912 to 1914, the new art movements on the continent were introduced to England. At the same time the abrupt change of direction in the visual arts was apparent in the work of English painters and sculptors.

"These were years," John Rothenstein states, "when the art world of London, like that of Paris, was deeply but optimistically agitated by the new movements that were continually germinating, clashing, intermingling, changing direction."<sup>1</sup>

Most commentators on the period cite the post-impressionist exhibitions as marking the advent in England of the modernist movement in the visual arts. In particular, the second one, which included an extensive selection of the work of the cubists as well as the fauves, was seen as an announcement of a new era. Roger Fry, in the introduction to the catalogue of the second exhibition, emphasizes the revolutionary aspect of this art, pointing out that "it was no mere variation upon accepted themes but implied a re-





consideration of the very purpose and aim as well as the methods of pictorial and plastic art."<sup>2</sup> Herbert Read, commenting on the effect of these exhibitions, notes that "the aesthetic notions of most people were thoroughly outraged, and though the invaders made some progress, the struggle was still going on when another and more serious war distracted our attention."<sup>3</sup>

Within this context, vorticism played itself out as a revolution within a revolution. Dominating the movement were a number of painters who were interested, like the cubists, in experimenting in their medium, in exploring visually the meaning and mechanics of what appeared to be a transformed environment. Lewis, writing in the Egoist in January, 1914, points out that "a man who passes his days amid the rigid lines of houses, a plague of cheap ornamentation, noisy street locomotion, the Bedlam of the press, will evidently possess a different habit of vision to a man living amongst the lines of a landscape."<sup>4</sup> But, in addition, these painters also formed an opposition group. They were vehemently opposed to all aspects of conventional English life, the passive world of the impressionist painters, and also certain characteristics of cubism, expressionism, and futurism. In this latter respect--in the extension of their attack to include the modernist movement itself--vorticism had more in common with dadaism than with any of the other movements



of the time--as Pound notes later in his Guide to Kulchur.

The artists who were to form the vorticist group gradually came together in a series of retreats from other group affiliations--initially a retreat from Roger Fry's Omega Workshops. Wyndham Lewis, along with Eric Gill and Stanley Spencer, had exhibited at Fry's second Post-Impressionist exhibition, and subsequent to this, Lewis had been invited to join the Omega Workshops which Fry had established as a design centre in the summer of 1913. Following a dispute over the allocation of a commission, Lewis, Cuthbert Hamilton, Edward Wadsworth and Frederick Etchells left the Omega group and inaugurated an open attack on it in the form of a "round robin" letter circulated to the press and the artistic community in October, 1913. In this letter they complain that "the Idol is still Prettiness, with its mid-Victorian languish of the neck" and note with regret that the Omega Workshops had seemed "to promise, in the opportunities afforded it by the support from the most intellectual quarters, emancipation from the middle-man shark" but instead "a new form of fish in the troubled waters of Art has been revealed in the meantime, the Pecksniff-shark, a timid but voracious journalistic monster, unscrupulous, smooth-tongued and, owing chiefly to its weakness, mischievous."<sup>5</sup>





In opposition to the Omega Workshops, the Rebel Art Centre was established by Lewis at a house which Kate Lechmere had taken at 38 Great Ormond Street. The painters who had left the Omega group exhibited together, along with C. R. W. Nevinson and the sculptor Jacob Epstein, early in 1914. Writing about their activities in the Egoist in January, 1914, Lewis describes them as "a vertiginous but not exotic island, in the placid and respectable archipelago of English art," a volcanic eruption appearing suddenly "above the waves following certain seismic shakings beneath the surface." They were exploring and reflecting "the different habit of vision" of the urban landscape:

The work of this group of artists for the most part underlines such geometric bases and structure of life, and they would spend their energies rather in showing a different skeleton and abstraction than formerly could exist than a different degree of hairiness or dress. All revolutionary painting to-day has in common the rigid reflections of stone and steel in the spirit of the artist; that desire for stability as though a machine were being built to fly or kill with; an alienation from the traditional photographer's trade and realisation of the value of colour and form as such independently of what recognizable form it covers or encloses. People are invited, in short, to change entirely their idea of the painter's mission, and penetrate, deferentially, with him into a transposed universe as abstract as, though different from, the musicians'.<sup>6</sup>

A rift, similar in effect to the one in the Omega Workshops, occurred a few months later in the Camden Town Group, with which Lewis had previously exhibited. An uneasy alliance between the "post-impressionist" element and the older impression-





ist group among whom Walter Sickert was prominent was ended when Sickert launched a series of attacks in the New Age during the spring of 1914 on some of the painters and sculptors. These attacks were answered by Lewis and T. E. Hulme and the controversy lasted for several months. Sickert questioned the sincerity of the English post-impressionist painters, accusing them of imitating the douanier Rousseau. "Our Nevinsons, Wyndham Lewises, Phelan Gibbes, etc.," he complains, "are not custom-house officers, but more or less clever and superannuated art-students trying to paint like custom-house officers."<sup>7</sup> He also finds that non-representation in the work of Gaudier-Brzeska, Epstein, and Lewis is limited: "While the faces of the persons suggested are frequently nil, non-representation is forgotten when it comes to the sexual organs."<sup>8</sup> A few months later, Gaudier-Brzeska, reviewing the Allied Artists Association Exhibition at Holland Park Hall, objects to the representational elements present in the paintings of Harold Gilman and Charles Ginner--members of the Camden Town Group--"and grieved to see no hope for them."<sup>9</sup>

The controversies within the various London art factions were tending to leave isolated the artists who were to comprise the vorticist group. Whatever group activities there were up to



the spring of 1914 appear to have largely centred around Madame Strindberg's nightclub, the Cave of the Golden Calf, where Edgar Japson recalls, "Vorticist dances" and "Vorticist assaults on the drama"<sup>10</sup> took place in a room supported by Epstein columns and given a kind of frenzied visual violence, according to one observer,<sup>11</sup> by Lewis's wall frescoes. Plans were now made to make the Rebel Art Centre an active focal point for experimental art. Lectures and exhibitions were to be given and their activities extended into architecture, music and house furnishing. A beginning was made in the area of applied arts. The Centre took a stand at the Allied Artists Association exhibition, displaying boxes, fans, and other small objects, which Gaudier-Brzeska describes as "the finest of these objects I have seen."<sup>12</sup> A theatre was rented and some lectures were given there and at the Rebel Art Centre in the spring of 1914 by Lewis, T. E. Hulme, Ford Madox Ford, and Pound.

## II

With the opening of the Rebel Art Centre, the experimental groups in the visual arts and in literature converged. The centre appears to have served during the brief period of its existence as a focal point, bringing together in a somewhat formalized associa-





tion a group of people whose activities had interlocked frequently during the previous three or four years. The main points of intersection in the years prior to 1914 were the gatherings that centred around Ford Madox Ford, A. O. Orage, Yeats and T. E. Hulme.

Of these four, Yeats, whose presence in London had drawn Pound there in 1908, appears to have been the least sympathetic towards the experimental. Richard Aldington claims that "one of the most difficult evenings I spent with Yeats was when a party of us took Marinetti, the Italian Futurist, to see him."<sup>13</sup> Yeats found in "Wyndham Lewis's Cubist pictures an element corresponding to rhetoric arising from his confusion of the abstract with the rhythmical."<sup>14</sup> He praised Pound for approaching "the right sort of music for poetry"<sup>15</sup> and for his search for exact definition, but found that Pound's own poetry was ruined by his continual experimentation. While all the younger writers appear to have passed through Yeats' Monday evenings, he seemed to some of them at the time, as Eliot later describes his own first impression, a shadowy figure from an older generation with his major accomplishments behind him<sup>16</sup>--an impression echoed in the faint note of irony in Canto 82:





even I can remember

at 18 Woburn Buildings

Said Mr. Tancred

of the Jerusalem and Sicily Tancreds, to Yeats

'If you would read us one of your choice

and

perfect

lyrics.<sup>17</sup>

Orage too appears to have had little sympathy with the attitudes of the experimentalists in the arts, or liking for the imagist poetry he printed in the New Age. Pound, in a letter written in 1913, observes that Orage's literary taste is "unfortunate."<sup>18</sup> Paul Selver, in his reminiscences on the New Age Circle, emphasizes the degree to which Pound, who had begun an association with this weekly in 1911 that was to last until his departure from England, was an interloper: "With his clipped beard, his semi-Shakespearean profile and his velveteen apparel, Ezra flaunted his aestheticism in a manner which jarred upon some of the less aesthetic New-Age-ites."<sup>19</sup> But the content of the New Age had never been rigidly confined within the boundaries that its origin as an organ of Fabian socialism would seem to suggest, but reflected Orage's own diversity of impulse, his interest, on the



one hand, in spiritualism and psychology, and, on the other, in specific social and political problems. There was always space for divergent points of view. During the winter of 1913-14, the New Age became the main battleground where the English revolution in the visual arts was both attacked and defended, the initial controversy arising when T. E. Hulme and Lewis charged in to defend Epstein against the derisive attacks of the New Age's own art critic, A. M. Ludovici. While Pound's later praise of Orage as one of the men of that time who "keep getting LARGER as the time passes"<sup>20</sup> is doubtless conditioned by the fact that Orage became a convert to Douglasite economic theory in 1918, it is clear that the New Age was one of the few journals in those years hospitable to serious discussion in a wide variety of areas.

The other important journal of the period was Ford Madox Ford's English Review--"the EVENT of 1909-10"<sup>21</sup> as Pound later describes it. The English Review, during the period of Ford's editorship from 1908 to 1910 provided the main outlet for the younger writers, but, like Orage, Ford (then Hueffer) found himself becoming entangled in a movement to which he had a certain degree of antipathy, for this younger group of writers had at least one thing in common--a distaste for the impressionist method that Ford himself practised. Ford recounts in "Thus





to Revisit" how he had planned the periodical to be the voice of a group--initially a vehicle for the older established writers, James, Conrad, Meredith and Hardy--but finding that his editorial direction inspired more controversy than cohesion, he turned to the younger writers, Pound, Lawrence, Lewis, Richard Aldington, "H. D." and F. S. Flint. His comments on the history of the English Review mirror his own attitude, with its mingling of condescension, interest, repugnance, and the passion for good writing that enabled him to act as the reluctant impressario for the "enemy":

Its only outcome, as a movement producer, was the group, which, from 1910 to 1914 figured as Les Jeunes of London literary life. We printed the "first efforts" of Mr. Pound, Mr. Wyndham Lewis, Mr. D. H. Lawrence--and I daresay we printed those of other Futurists, Vorticisits, Imagists. . . . At any rate in our editorial salons they found chairs and sofas on which to recline whilst they settled the fate of already fermenting Europe, and certainly we should have printed them all, if we had been able to keep on. So for three or four years, culminating in the London season of 1914, they made a great deal of noise in a city that was preparing to reverberate with greater echoes. They found their earthly home and general headquarters in a cabaret beneath the New Gallery. There, to the sound of prophetically African music they plotted blowing Parnassus to the moon. They came near to doing it. They stood for the non-representational in art; for vers libre; for tapage in prose and for death to impressionism.<sup>22</sup>

Until 1912, the English Review was the only periodical in England publishing Pound's verse and it was in this publication during 1909 that Lewis's first writing appeared--a series





of short stories about Finisterre.<sup>23</sup> Lewis claimed to have met Pound through his association with Ford and also with Rebecca West, who was to contribute to Blast.<sup>24</sup> References to Ford's influence on Pound--particularly to the effect on his poetry of Ford's emphasis on le mot juste--are scattered throughout Pound's critical writing and letters. The English Review Pound has held up as a model for its quality of editorship and material to group after group of young writers seeking advice from him on the mechanics of starting a little magazine.

The circles that gathered around Ford and Yeats appear to have been small compared to the group that collected during those years around T. E. Hulme at Mrs. Kepplewhite's on Frith Street-- "a remarkable salon," the painter C. R. W. Nevinson has described it, "the equal of which I have never seen,"<sup>25</sup> an opinion also expressed by Jacob Epstein in his autobiography. All the painters and sculptors from the various London groups and the younger writers and journalists, including Orage and his New Age circle, are reported to have passed through Mrs. Kepplewhite's drawing room, where an environment was created for a cross-fertilisation among the arts. Many participants have later written of the brilliance of these gatherings and of Hulme's own personality.



Because Hulme's salon provided a meeting place for all the members of the vorticist group (with the apparent exception of Ford), the temptation exists to see vorticism as an active manifestation of what was present in an embryo stage in Hulme's group, but there would appear to have been both a lack of enthusiasm for these evenings and a possible break in the continuity of attendance on the part of both Lewis and Pound--a break which makes it difficult to assess Hulme's place in the vorticist movement. Hulme's salon at Mrs. Kepplewhite's had been preceded by an earlier group--a poet's dining club with which Pound, who had contributed some poems to one of their four anthologies, was briefly associated in 1909. Pound's description in Ripostes of these meetings--"evenings and meetings of two years gone, dull enough at the time, but rather pleasant to look back upon"<sup>26</sup>--indicates that by 1912 he was no longer associated with this group. Lewis, in a letter written around 1914, describes the Frith Street group as "pretty boring folk" and complains that Epstein was "the only individual in that little set who does anything or has any personality."<sup>27</sup> Pound later claims that Hulme's "evenings were diluted with crap like Bergson and it became necessary to use another evening a week if one wanted to discuss our own experiments or other current minor events in verse





writing, Tagore, Frost, Selver's struggles with the Slovak and Czech poets, etc., or to receive Monsieur Barzun's philippics and news from Paris."<sup>28</sup>

It is apparent that Hulme himself--in spite of his interest in the art of Epstein, Lewis and Gaudier-Brzeska and his sharing of similar attitudes towards art--was somewhat ambivalent in his attitude towards the group that was forming at the Rebel Art Centre. Although Hulme had been engaged in defending modern art during the previous two or three years and is reported to have participated in the lectures given at the Rebel Art Centre in the spring of 1914, writing in the New Age in July of that year, he makes a point of expressing his approval of David Bomberg's standing "somewhat apart from the other Cubists," and in doing so discloses his own withdrawal from active participation in the particular modern movement that Lewis and Pound were beginning to promote. "I noticed," Hulme states, "that in signing a collective protest, published a few weeks ago, he [Bomberg] added in a footnote that he had nothing whatever to do with the Rebel Art Centre--very wisely, in my opinion."<sup>29</sup>





## III

Pound and Lewis themselves had met shortly after Pound's arrival in England in 1908 and Lewis's return in 1909 from a long period on the continent. In Canto 80, Pound claims that it was Lawrence Binyon who introduced them:

So it is to Mr. Binyon that I owe, initially,

Mr. Lewis, Mr. P. Wyndham Lewis.<sup>30</sup>

R. S. Flint, writing in 1915 the history of the imagist movement which had been first announced in the Ripostes of 1912, notes that at one point Pound "made Imagism to mean pictures as Wyndham Lewis understands them."<sup>31</sup> While it would be inaccurate to read later events back into the origins of imagism in the years prior to 1912, there is evidence in Pound's critical writing during the period from 1912 to 1914 of both a growing interest in the visual arts and a preoccupation with problems similar to those of the artists who were reacting against the impressionists and the tradition of illusionist art.

Writing in the New Age in February, 1912, Pound discusses the fallacy of attempting to imitate colloquial speech in literary forms and notes that "in every art I can think of we are damned and clogged by the mimetic; dynamic acting is nearly forgotten."<sup>32</sup>



The attempt to imitate impressionist painting in verbal modes is denigrated by Pound the following month in a review of Ford Madox Ford's High Germany. Pound notes that "the conception of poetry is a process more intense than the reception of an impression" and provides a formulation of a distinction between the mediums of poetry and painting:

Impressionism belongs in paint, it is of the eye. The cinematograph records, for instance, the "impression" of any given action or place, far more exactly than the finest writing, it transmits the impression to its "audience" with less work on their part. A ball of gold and a gilded ball give the same "impression" to the painter. Poetry is in some way concerned with the specific gravity of things, with their nature.<sup>33</sup>

In June of that year, the poem "The Return" is first published in the English Review--a poem Pound later describes as an "objective reality" with a complicated sort of significance similar in effect to Mr. Epstein's "Sun God" or Mr. Brzeska's "Boy with a Coney."<sup>34</sup> In Patria Mia, which ran as a series of instalments in the New Age towards the end of the year, Pound shows a particular interest in the nocturnal visual effects of New York-- "squares after squares of flame, set and cut into ether"<sup>35</sup>-- and in the structure of the buildings which he describes as "Egyptian in their contempt of the unit."<sup>36</sup>

The statements made at this time concerning the imagist school show an awareness of the continental visual art movements







and of the literary schools that had sprung up as their satellites, as a note on "Imagisme" signed by Flint in Poetry in March, 1913, but apparently written by Pound,<sup>37</sup> indicates:

The imagistes admitted that they were contemporaries of the Post Impressionists and the Futurists, but they had nothing in common with these schools. They had not published a manifesto. They were not a revolutionary school; their only endeavour was to write in accordance with the best tradition, as they found it in the best writers of all time, --in Sappho, Catullus, Villon.<sup>38</sup>

Later in the year, writing to Alice Corbin Henderson concerning some poems he is about to submit to Poetry, Pound describes them as "not futurism," and "not post-impressionism, but. . . work contemporary with those schools and to my mind the most significant that I have yet brought off."<sup>39</sup>

By November 1913, Pound has met Epstein and Gaudier-Brzeska. Attempting to extend his definition of the term "great art" to painting in an article in the New Freewoman during that month, Pound produces a list that mirrors Wyndham Lewis's predilections with an accuracy that seems unlikely to have been accidental:

Thus in painting, I mean something or other vaguely associated in my mind with work labelled Durer, and Rembrandt, and Velasquez, etc., and with the painters whom I scarcely know, possibly of T'ang and Sung--though I dare say I've got the wrong labels--and with some Egyptian designs that should probably be thought of as sculpture.<sup>40</sup>



The following month Pound writes to William Carlos Williams in the United States trying to console Williams for his condition of exile: "You may get something slogging away by yourself that you would miss in The Vortex--and that we miss."<sup>41</sup>

The winter of 1913-14 Pound spent in the country with Yeats, coming into London for art exhibitions and for the lectures on modern art given to the Quest Society by Lewis, and by Hulme, who was introducing the ideas of Wilhelm Worringer. Worringer, who described art as the product of the "will to form," saw in the art of the past two major impulses--the impulse towards abstraction in primitive art, and the impulse towards empathy in Greek and Renaissance art. Hulme, looking at the art of Epstein, Gaudier-Brzeska and Lewis in the light of Worringer's comments, characterized this art as "geometrical" and saw it as replacing the "vital" art of the Renaissance and Greek tradition. This geometrical art was, Hulme thought, the precursor of a change of attitude towards the world. These lectures Pound outlines in an article in the Egoist:

Mr. Hulme told us that there was vital art and geometric art. Mr. Lewis compared the soul to a bullet. I gathered from his speech that you could set a loaf of bread in an engine shop and that this would not cause said loaf to produce Cubist paintings.<sup>42</sup>

Pound goes on in the same article to describe the new sculpture.





His desire to communicate the impact of this sculpture and the difficulty of describing its effect in verbal terms are apparent:

It is not to be denied that Mr. Epstein has brought in a new beauty. Art is to be admired rather than explained. The jargon of these sculptors is beyond me. I do not precisely know why I admire a green granite, female, apparently pregnant monster with one eye going around a square corner.

The fact that he has now seen a significant relation between the kind of poetry he wishes to write and painting and sculpture of the "vortex" group--faits accomplis before his eyes--is apparent in his relating of this sculpture to literature:

Realism in literature has had its run. For thirty or more years we have had in deluge, the analyses of the fatty degeneration of life. A generation has been content to analyse. They were necessary. My generation is not the generation of the romanticists. We have heard all that the "realists" have to say. . . . We do not think his statement complete, for he has often dissected the dead and taken no count of forces. To the present condition of things we have nothing to say but "merde"; and this new wild sculpture says it.

Pound ends his discussion with a declaration of par, a pre-Blast manifesto in which he explores the analogy latent in Hulme's discussion of the modern and the primitive:

The artist recognises his life in terms of the Tahiytian savage. His chance for existence is equal to that of the bushman. His dangers are as subtle and sudden.

He must live by craft and violence. . . .

We turn back, we artists, to the powers of the air, to the djinns who were our allies aforetime, to the spirits of our ancestors. It is by them that we have ruled and shall rule, and by their connivance that we shall mount again in our hierarchy. The





aristocracy of entail and of title has decayed, the aristocracy of commerce is decaying, the aristocracy of the arts is ready for its service.

Modern civilization has bred a race with brains like those of rabbits and we who are the heirs of the witch-doctor and the voodoo, we artists who have been so long the despised are about to take over control.<sup>43</sup>

#### IV

The painter William Roberts, describing the milling art groups in London in the spring of 1914, notes that

we have T. E. Hulme and the Anglo-Jewish Cubists together with Nevinson's Italian Futurists against the Francophile Roger Fry. Wyndham Lewis with his Americans attacking all and sundry; whilst into this mêlée, adding to the general confusion, charges Walter Sickert with his cockneys.<sup>44</sup>

In this environment, through a process of opposition and discussion, a particular vorticist aesthetic was becoming defined, but the activities of the futurist leader, Marinetti, in London appear to have been responsible for putting "the match to the fuse of Blast,"<sup>45</sup> as Geoffrey Wagner describes it. John Rothenstein, in his introduction to the catalogue of the retrospective Lewis exhibition held at the Tate Gallery in 1956, claims that "by 1913 Lewis's externalist and intellectualist aesthetic, though not yet publicly proclaimed in writing and not worked out in detail, was formed." "What touched it into militant expression," Rothenstein states, "were the incursions into England of the Duce of Futurism."<sup>46</sup>



The futurist movement had begun with the publication of Marinetti's manifesto in the Paris Figaro in 1909 in which he had proclaimed the arrival of the new dynamic artist who would plot the contours of the industrial age and dynamite the art of the past. A group of artists--among them Gino Severini, Umberto Boccioni, A. Soffici, Carlo Carra, Luigi Russolo and Giacomo Balla--gathered around Marinetti and a series of manifestoes were issued. Their ideas were disseminated by means of Marinetti's lectures and poetry recitals in the capitals of Europe and by a travelling exhibition of futurist painting, which opened in Paris in 1912 and moved from there to London, Berlin, Amsterdam and Brussels.

What the futurists were attempting in their manifestoes and works of art was a definition of the dynamism and mechanics of the industrial city. The factory, the new modes of transportation and the crowd invaded the canvas and the poem. "We are the primitives of a new sensibility,"<sup>47</sup> Boccioni announces. Among their aims, as described by Rosa Clough in her study of the movement, was the desire "to discover the activity of matter, which had always been considered inert; to sing the instincts of ores, stones, wood; to marvel at the group instinct, the aversions and attractions not of men, but of metals--their alloys, fusions, and combinations;







to discover new sources of passion in the dramas of the chemical laboratory or the tragedy of the blast furnaces."<sup>48</sup> In the opening and closing of a valve, the futurist Boccioni finds "a rhythm as lovely as that of the animal eye."<sup>49</sup>

In order to express this moving world of the mechanical city, all traditional modes were to be laid aside, and impediments in the form of libraries, academies, museums and universities destroyed. Velocity was proclaimed as both the underlying principle and criterion of all things, and as the new "absolute" which "kills time and space" and creates a simultaneous, continuous universe:

Nous vivons déjà dans l'absolu, puisque nous avons créé l'éternelle vitesse omniprésente. . . le temps et l'espace sont morts hier. . . .

Nous déclarons que la splendeur du monde s'est enrichie d'une beauté nouvelle: la beauté de la vitesse. . . . Une automobile rugissante qui a l'air de courir sur la mitraille est plus belle que la Victoire de Samothrace.<sup>50</sup>

Gino Severini, in his introduction to the catalogue of his exhibition in London in 1913, notes that

we choose to concentrate our attention on things in motion because our modern sensibility is particularly qualified to grasp the idea of speed. Heavy, powerful motor-cars rushing through the crowded streets of our cities, dancers reflected in the fairy ambience of light and colour, aeroplanes flying above the heads of an excited throng. . . . These sources of emotion satisfy our sense of the lyric and dramatic universe, better than do two pears and an apple.<sup>51</sup>



The futurist man was accordingly active and bellicose. His favourite locale was the battlefield where life becomes a futurist poem in a dynamic eruption of all possibilities, a simultaneous clash of cries, shots and commands. His art expressed the continuous present-in-motion of a world presided over by velocity. Motion was painted by representing successive phases of a body in motion, the component limbs of the body repeated in a radial arrangement. In sculpture, mechanical means were used to create actual motion and to bring the world of machines and tools into the sculptural form itself. In poetry all impediments to the communication of movement--syntax, traditional metrics, many parts of speech--were repudiated. Onomatopoeia was exalted as the central poetic device appropriate for the expression of industrial dynamism. In Marinetti's "The Raid on Adrianople," the futurist theme of war found its explosive onomatopoeic expression:

Adrianople est cerne de toutes partes  
 SSSSrrrrr zitzitzitzitzi PAAAAAAAAAAAAAgh  
 rrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr

ouah ouah ouah, départ des trains suicides,  
 ouah ouah ouah

Tchip tchip tchip --feeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeelez!





Tchip, tchip, tchip -- des messages télégraphiques,  
couturières Américaines

Piiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiing, sssssssssrrrrrrrrr, zitzitzit  
toum toum Patrouille tapie --

Vaniteeeee, viande congeléeeeeeee -- veil-  
leuse de La Madone<sup>52</sup>

Marinetti was in London frequently during the period from 1912 to 1914, and gave lectures at the Dore Gallery several times during 1913 and again the following spring. In November 1913 he lectured at Hulme's Poets' Club where he attacked Wagner and acclaimed H. G. Wells. Jacob Epstein observed Marinetti's arrival at one of the futurist exhibitions "with a few twigs he had found in Hyde Park, and a tooth-brush and a match-box"<sup>53</sup> which he hung on the chandelier as an example of the "new sculpture." The painter C. R. W. Nevinson, who had joined the futurist movement, found himself accompanying Marinetti's poetry recitals on the drum, and admiring Marinetti's new model of modern clothing with "one dynamic button."<sup>54</sup>

Lewis had joined Nevinson in organizing a welcoming banquet for Marinetti in the fall of 1913, and later had asked Marinetti to lecture at the Rebel Art Centre, but by the following May, the group at the Rebel Art Centre had decided to announce their separation from futurism. They descended on Marinetti's lecture at the Dore Gallery and attempted to compete with Marinetti's onomatopoeic





effects. Lewis later describes the occasion in Blasting and

Bombardiering:

I assembled in Greek Street a determined band of miscellaneous anti-futurists. Mr. Epstein was there: Gaudier-Brzeska, T. E. Hulme, Edward Wadsworth. . . . There were about ten of us. After a hearty meal we shuffled bellicosely round to the Doré Gallery.

Marinetti had entrenched himself upon a high lecture platform, and he put down a tremendous barrage in French as we entered. Gaudier went into action at once. . . . He was sniping him without intermission, standing up in his place in the audience all the while. The remainder of our party maintained a confused uproar.

The Italian intruder was worsted. . . .

But it was a matter for astonishment what Marinetti could do with his unaided voice. He certainly made an extraordinary amount of noise. . . . My equanimity when first subjected to the sounds of mass-bombardment in Flanders was possibly due to my marinettian preparation--it seemed "all quiet" to me in fact, by comparison.<sup>55</sup>

The following month Marinetti and Nevinson issued a futurist manifesto from the Rebel Art Centre in an attempt, they said, "to cure English art of that most grave of all maladies--passé-ism." To achieve this end, they recommended the creation of "a powerful advance guard," and an art that is "strong, virile, and anti-sentimental," in which the portrayal of sport, "a fearless desire for adventure, a heroic instinct of discovery, a worship of strength and a physical and moral courage" were to be essential elements.<sup>56</sup>

The group at the Rebel Art Centre hastened to dissociate themselves in a letter to the newspapers that had printed Marinetti's and Nevinson's manifesto, pointing out that there were certain



artists in England who did not belong to any of the passe-ist groups, and who did not on that account agree with the futurism of Signor Marinetti.

Blast,<sup>57</sup> announcing the vorticist movement, appeared shortly afterwards with Lewis as its editor. Printed by John Rodker's Cube Press, which had earlier published a portfolio of Lewis's "Timon of Athens" drawings, Blast was planned as a visual shock with its outsize type articulating generous pages (12" x 9-1/2") and its large black title diagonally placed against a vivid puce background. Included were a series of Blasts and Blesses; manifestoes of the vorticist movement signed by Richard Aldington, Arbuthnot,<sup>58</sup> L. Atkinson, Gaudier-Brzeska, J. Dismorr, C. Hamilton, Pound, W. Roberts, H. Sanders, E. Wadsworth and Lewis; the beginning of Ford Madox Ford's novel The Good Soldier; a short story by Rebecca West; and extracts from Kandinsky's "Concerning the Spiritual in Art." Lewis contributed a series of notes and vortices outlining the principles of the movement, some essays on contemporary art, and the play Enemy of the Stars; Pound, an article defining the vortex, and some poetry. Numerous reproductions of paintings and drawings, in which abstract geometrical forms and machine elements predominate, were included. One of many celebration dinners was held on July 15th in a restaurant Pound recalls







frequently in the Catos, the Dieudonné in Ryder Street.

Blast was planned as a periodical that would introduce new work in literature and in the visual arts as well as promote the vorticist movement, but the war intervened and only one more issue was published a year later. Its editor noted that

Blast finds itself surrounded by a multitude of other Blasts of all sizes and descriptions. This puce-coloured cockleshell will, however, try and brave the waves of blood, for the serious mission it has on the other side of World-War.<sup>59</sup>

This time Blast appeared in a more sober khaki hue. Its type and format no longer mirrored an avant-garde visionary projection of artistic revolution but the actual battlefield where Gaudier-Brzeska had by then been killed. In Lewis's cover design, a series of metallic men aim their rifles at a city of staccato structures. This second issue, subtitled "Review of the Great English Vortex," followed much the same pattern as the first. To it Lewis and Pound contributed further articles on vorticism and the contemporary milieu and its art; Gaudier-Brzeska, a history of sculpture viewed in terms of the characteristic forms of each period. Ford, Pound, and T. S. Eliot, who had come to England from the continent at the outbreak of the war, contributed some poetry; and various members of the group, illustrations and drawings.



A vorticist exhibition, organized by Lewis, was held in June 1915 at the Doré Galleries--the first occasion Lewis notes in his introduction to the catalogue, on which a gallery in England had "been used for the special exhibition of nothing but the works of this tendency by English artists."<sup>60</sup> Pieces of sculpture, paintings and drawings by Dismorr, Etchells, Gaudier-Brzeska, Sanders, Wadsworth, Roberts and Lewis were exhibited as vorticist work. A group of artists, not listed as vorticists, also exhibited: Adeney, Atkinson, Bomberg, Duncan Grant, Kramer, and Nevinson, the latter listed in the catalogue as a futurist. Lewis points out in his introductory comments on the exhibition that "in addition to the Vorticist Group several other artists similar in aim have been invited to exhibit" and claims that "the show includes specimens of the work of every notable painter working at all in one or other of the new directions."<sup>61</sup>

## V

The term, vorticism, was used as a designation which applied to all the arts and was apparently accepted as such by the participants in the movement at that time.<sup>62</sup> The inclusion of all the arts within the frame of this designation, however, did not imply for the vorticists any blurring of the distinctions between





the arts. Unlike the futurists, who, in the assimilation of poetry and music in "bruitism," the paintings of sculpture, and the pictorial use of typography in poetry, sought a synthesis of the arts, the vorticists maintained that the boundaries of each individual art must remain clearly defined. Each work of art should express the emotion or subject appropriate to its own medium and the personal predilections of the artist:

The arts have indeed "some sort of common bond, some inter-recognition." Yet certain emotions or subjects find their most appropriate expression in some one particular art. The work of art which is most "worth while" is the work which would need a hundred works of any other kind of art to explain it. A fine statue is the core of a hundred poems. A fine poem is a score of symphonies. There is music which would need a hundred paintings to express it. There is no synonym for the Victory of Samothrace or for Mr. Epstein's fénites. There is no painting of Villons Frères Humains. Such works are what we call works of the "first intensity."<sup>63</sup>

Pound notes in his book on Gaudier-Brzeska that

at no time was it intended that either Mr. Lewis, or Gaudier or myself or Mr. Wadsworth or Mr. Etchells should crawl into each other's skins or that we should in any way surrender our various identities, or that the workings of certain fundamental principles of the arts should force any one of us to turn his own particular art into a flat imitation of the external features of the particular art of any other member of our group.<sup>64</sup>

Pound claims that "in different media. . . each artist works out the same and yet a totally different set of problems."<sup>65</sup> He draws attention in an essay on Joyce in the Egoist in July, 1914, to the need for distinguishing between a literary movement which mimics





a movement in painting, and the literary movement which does in fact represent a parallel registering of awareness:

Every movement in painting picks up a few writers who try to imitate in words what someone has done in paint. Thus one writer saw a picture by Manet and talked of "pink pigs blossoming on a hill-side," and a later writer talked of "slate-blue hair" and "raspberry-coloured flanks."

These "impressionists" who write in imitation of Monet's softness instead of writing in imitation of Flaubert's definiteness, are a bore, a grimy, or perhaps I should say, a rosy, floribund bore.

The spirit of the decade strikes properly upon all the arts. There are "parallel movements." Their causes and their effects may not seem, superficially, similar.

This mimicking of painting ten or twenty years late, is not in the least the same as the "literary movement" parallel to the painting movement imitated.<sup>66</sup>

The vorticists' aim was to explore the form-content of the machine-world, "this enormous, jangling, journalistic, fairy desert of modern life" which serves the artist "as Nature did more technically primitive man."<sup>67</sup> Like the futurists, they felt that the content of their art must be derived from the contemporary environment. They did not agree with Roger Fry that "the rhythmic sequences of change" in the arts were determined "much more by its own internal forces--and by the adjustment within it, of its own elements--than by external forces." Nor did they see the modern movements in the arts, as Fry did, as a revolution "out of all proportion to any corresponding change in life as a whole."<sup>68</sup> They saw themselves as members of the











culminating in

PURGATORY OF

PUTNEY

.....

We will allow Wonder Zoos. But we do not want the

GLOOMY VICTORIAN CIRCUS in

Piccadilly Circus.<sup>70</sup>

A more subtle attack was directed against modern art movements-- in particular, cubism and futurism--beneath whose guise of modernism lurked, according to the vorticists, a certain degree of obsolescence. In Lewis's definition of vorticism in the catalogue of the Vorticist Exhibition in 1915, the significant terms are presented as antitheses, the qualities of vorticist art designated in terms of opposition to certain aspects of the art of their contemporaries and immediate predecessors:

By vorticism we mean (a) ACTIVITY as opposed to the tasteful PASSIVITY of Picasso; (b) SIGNIFICANCE as opposed to the dull or anecdotal character to which the Naturalist is condemned; (c) ESSENTIAL MOVEMENT and ACTIVITY (such as the energy of a mind) as opposed to imitative cinematography, the fuss and hysterics of the Futurists.<sup>71</sup>

Opposed to both the embalming of the art of the past in the academy and the sentimentalization of the present in the machine-cult of the futurists, the vorticists sought to plot the underlying dynamics of the present world rather than the surface eruptions



that intoxicated the futurists. According to Lewis,

Our vortex is not afraid of the Past: it has forgotten its existence.

Our vortex regards the Future as sentimental as the Past.

The Future is distant, like the Past, and therefore sentimental.

The mere element "Past" must be retained to sponge up and absorb our melancholy.

Everything absent, remote, requiring projection, in the veiled weakness of the mind, is sentimental.

The Present can be intensely sentimental--especially if you exclude the mere element "Past."

Our vortex does not deal in reactive Action only, nor identify the Present with numbing displays of vitality.

The new vortex plunges to the heart of the Present.

The chemistry of the Present is different to that of the Past. With this different chemistry we produce a New Living Abstraction.

.....

With our Vortex the Present is the only active thing.

Life is the Past and the Future.

The Present is Art.<sup>72</sup>

Pound, while noting that "we are all futurists to the extent of believing with Guillaume Apollinaire that 'on ne peut pas porter partout avec soi le cadavre de son père', "<sup>73</sup> claims that the

vorticists, unlike the futurists, were not complete iconoclasts:

"The vorticist has not this curious tic for destroying past

glories."<sup>74</sup> Those elements of the past that retained some en-

ergy form an integral part of the vorticist art:

All experience rushes into this vortex. All the energized past, all the past that is living and worthy to live. ALL MOMENTUM, which is the past bearing upon us, RACE, RACE-MEMORY, instinct charging the PLACID,

NON-ENERGIZED FUTURE.





The DESIGN of the future is in the grip of the human vortex. All the past that is vital, all the past that is capable of living into the future, is pregnant in the vortex, NOW.<sup>75</sup>

The art from the past that was thought relevant to the present vortex was on the whole an art remote in time or space from the European tradition. All the vorticists shared an interest in Chinese art. The painters had a specialist interest in Dürer and early German woodcuts, and like the cubists, in primitive art, in particular the African mask; the sculptors, in Egyptian, Assyrian and African sculpture; Pound and the imagist poets in Greek, Latin and Chinese poetry. Pound also directed his attention specifically to the Tuscan and Provençal poetry where the languages could be seen in the process of completing their transformation from a previous inflected form. Hulme explains these interests in archaic art forms as part of a process of translation in which the artist, attempting to escape from the framework he is rejecting, works through a model that he can recognize as bearing some relation to himself:

Though the artist feels that he must have done with the contemporary means of expression, yet a new and more fitting method is not easily created. The way from intention to expression does not come naturally, as it were from in outwards. A man has first to obtain a foothold in this, so to speak, alien and external world of external expression, at a point near the one he is making for. He has to utilise some already existing methods of expression and work from them to the one that expresses his own personal conception more accurately and naturally.<sup>76</sup>





Pound notes in an article in Poetry early in 1915 that

the first step of a renaissance, or awakening, is the importation of models for painting, sculpture or writing. We have had many "movements," movements stimulated by "comparison." Flaminio and Amaltheus and the latinists of the quattrocento and cinquecento began a movement for enrichment which culminated in the Elizabethan stage, and which produced the French Pléiade. . . .

The romantic awakening dates from the production of Ossian. The last century rediscovered the middle ages. It is possible that this century may find a new Greece in China. In the meantime we have come upon a new table of values. I can only compare this endeavour of criticism to the contemporary search for pure color in painting.<sup>77</sup>

The vorticists defined their art as an art of the energized present, an art which has captured the point of maximum intensity: "Our vortex is white and abstract with its red-hot swiftness."<sup>78</sup> It is the presentation of "an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time,"<sup>79</sup> and the "radiant node or cluster . . . from which, and through which, and into which, ideas are constantly rushing."<sup>80</sup> It is an art of concentration, which repudiates secondary elaborations, ornamentation, the exploiting of similarities and analogies: "Our vortex will not hear of anything but its disastrous polished dance."<sup>81</sup> It is the presentation of the primary forms, the component elements that characterize each medium, elements which can be arranged as the most intense expression of the "intellectual and emotional complex." Pound isolates the following statement as expressing the primary tenet



of vorticism:

EVERY CONCEPT, EVERY EMOTION PRESENTS ITSELF TO THE VIVID CONSCIOUSNESS IN SOME PRIMARY FORM. IT BELONGS TO THE ART OF THIS FORM. IF SOUND, TO MUSIC; IF FORMED WORDS, TO LITERATURE; THE IMAGE, TO POETRY; FORM, TO DESIGN; COLOUR IN POSITION, TO PAINTING; FORM OR DESIGN IN THREE PLANES, TO SCULPTURE; MOVEMENT TO THE DANCE OR TO THE RHYTHM OF MUSIC OR OF VERSES.<sup>82</sup>

He saw this interest in the intense expression of primary forms as an impulse distinct from futurism, which was characterized as "a kind of accelerated impressionism, a spreading, or surface art, as opposed to vorticism, which is intensive."<sup>83</sup>

In painting, this emphasis on an intense exploration of primary forms fostered an impulse towards abstraction--but some representational elements usually remain readily apparent. The total impression that the painting and drawings labelled vorticist present is an appearance of stylized nature. The artist seems to have followed the procedure outlined in what Lewis later isolated as one of Blast's most important "blesses":

BLESS the HAIRDRESSER.

He attacks Mother Nature for a small fee.

Hourly he ploughs heads for sixpence,

Scours chins and lips for threepence.

He makes systematic mercenary war on this

WILDNESS.





He trims aimless and retrograde growths

Into CLEAN ARCHED SHAPES and

ANGULAR PLOTS.

BLESS this HESSIAN (or SILESIAN) EXPERT

correcting the grotesque anachronisms

of our physique.<sup>84</sup>

While some of Lewis's drawings (notably the "Plans" and "Planners" series) were almost totally abstract, the human form is plainly visible in the tubular figures William Roberts displays in the "Toe Dancer" and lurks beneath Lewis's brittle figures in "The Timon of Athens" drawings--figures protectively equipped with finely planed metallic vizors. John Rothenstein has noted that Lewis in these drawings had "made use of a modified Cubist technique, with a frankness rare if not unknown among continental Cubists, in order to enhance the intensity of the representation of an invented scene."<sup>85</sup> Similarly, in many of the drawings of the vorticist painters reproduced in Blast, an austere arrangement of geometrical forms is punctuated by the brief appearance of gears and pulleys and other moving machine parts--in accordance with the vorticist belief that machinery should be brought into the pictorial world as a necessary component of the twentieth century idiom. As in some cubist and expressionist painting, the



use of oblique lines and the representation of the vertical dimension by sharp diagonals creates an impression of movement.

Walter Michel, like most critics, describes the vorticist style of painting as in general part of the international Cubist movement, but finds that in addition to a "determinedly independent" iconography, the vorticists had enough in common--to allow one to speak of a "vorticist style." This style Michel has characterized as a preoccupation with "totally abstract, or near-abstract, composition; jagged overall forms; and small or narrow compositional elements sharply bounded by straight-lines or geometric arcs."<sup>86</sup>

In sculpture, Gaudier-Brzeska defined his aim as the expression of "the appreciation of masses in relation" through the definition of these masses by planes<sup>87</sup>--the artistic appeal to be based, according to Pound's interpretations of Gaudier-Brzeska's statements, on "pure form," on the composition, symmetry and balance rather than on the "caressability" of the subject.<sup>88</sup> Pound found this abstract sculpture of primary forms to have been realized in some of Epstein's work--in the "Rock Drill," the "Sun-God," and in the series of flenites, and in Gaudier-Brzeska's later sculpture, the "Dancer," the cut-brass figures, and the "Birds Erect."





In poetry, Pound and the imagists sought to reduce poetry to its atomic structure, to the image--the poet's natural pigment, used not as an ornament or symbol for discursive thought but as "the word beyond formulated language"<sup>89</sup>--and to the exact "toneless phrase" or "rhythm phrase," the absolute rhythm buried within the traditional verse forms. In Blast Pound presents H. D.'s "Oread" as an example of the way in which the primary elements can be exposed in poetry:

The vorticist will use only the primary media of his art.

The primary pigment of poetry is the IMAGE.

The vorticist will not allow the primary expression of any concept or emotion to drag itself out into mimicry.

In painting, Kandinsky, Picasso.

In poetry, this by H. D.

Whirl up sea --  
Whirl your pointed pines,  
Splash your great pines  
On our rocks,  
Hurl your green over us,                   90  
Cover us with your pools of fir.

In his essay on vorticism which appeared in the Fortnightly Review a few months after the first issue of Blast, Pound classifies as vorticist some of the poetry he had written earlier--"In a Station of the Metro," which he describes as "a form of superposition, that is to say, it is one idea set on top of another,"<sup>91</sup> "The Return" which is an objective reality and has a complicated sort of existence," and "Heather" which Pound sees as a poem



which represents a "state of consciousness" or "implies" or "implicates" it. He notes that insofar as these poems "are Imagisme, they fall in with the new pictures and the new sculpture."<sup>92</sup>

Lewis in the Enemy of the Stars provided a translation into prose of vorticist painting, mirroring its intense tactile exploration, manner of definition, and abrupt but measured shift-ings of focus:

Arghol, paler, tossed clumsily and swiftly  
from side to side, as though asleep.

He got nearer the door. The Clouds had room  
to waste themselves. The land continued in dull form,  
one per cent. animal, these immense bird-amoebas.  
Nerves made the earth pulse up against his side and  
reverberate. He dragged hot palms along the ground,  
caressing its explosive harshness.

All merely exterior attack.

His face calm seismograph of eruptions in  
Heaven.

Head of black, eagerly carved, herculean  
Venus, of iron tribe, hyper barbarous and ascetic.  
Lofty tents, sonorous with October rains, swarming  
from vast bright doll-like Asiatic lakes.

Faces following stars in blue rivers, till  
sea-struck, thundering engine of red water.

Pink idle brotherhood of little stars, passed  
over by rough cloud of sea.





Cataclysm of premature decadence.

Extermination of the resounding, sombre, summer tents in a decade, furious mass of images left: no human.

Immense production of barren muscular girl idols, wood verdigris, copper, dull paints, flowers.

Hundred idols to a man, and a race swamped in a hurricane of art, falling on big narrow soul of its artists.

Head heavy and bird-like, weighted to strike, living on his body, ungainly red Atlantic wave.<sup>93</sup>

One area in which the vorticists saw themselves as distinct from their contemporaries was in their handling of motion. Like the futurists, who wished to represent the object as part of a total field of force, the vorticists wished to avoid any mechanical arrangements of the parts within the whole. Lewis in Blast describes the "whole Cubist formula" as "a plastic formula for stone or for brick-built houses."<sup>94</sup> Lewis claims that the vorticist structure is "electric" with a "mastered, vivid vitality" as opposed to the "static and representative" world of the cubists or the world "swarming, exploding or burgeoning with life" that was the futurists' ideal.<sup>95</sup>

Professor Handley-Read finds a complex, dynamically controlled structure in several of Lewis's "Timon of Athens" drawings:

Here, in a seemingly chaotic design, made up of cubes and segments of masonry, and bristling with struts and spars, a number of overseeing Robots appear to be engaged in work of super-human reconstruction. A glaring white light casts dark shadows,



reveals surprising detail. Razor-sharp lines define the angles, the geometric curves, the arrogant Robots themselves. The design is organized so that it suggests the view seen when looking up into a pylon from below; there is an effect in the drawing of hurtling perspective, of far-reaching recession among bars and angles. In several of the Timon drawings it is as if the onlooker is about to be drawn up towards a point near the top of the picture, the focus or vortex into which the Robots themselves, despite their confidence, seem bound to follow.<sup>96</sup>

Similary, in the group drawings the "Plans" and the "Planners"

Handley-Read notes that "major lines appear to extend radially

from a focal point of disturbance which is, once again, the vor-

tex."<sup>97</sup> Pound, who in his essay on vorticism in the Fortnightly

Review characterizes Lewis's work as "the most articulate ex-

pression of my own decade,"<sup>98</sup> describes in a poem "Dogmatic

Statement on the Game and Play of Chess" in the second issue of

Blast the method and effect of the vorticist structure as it is dis-

played in Lewis's painting of the period--a juxtaposition of pri-

mary elements, each retaining its identity, but acting upon one

another in a complex moving pattern within which is a central

point of focus:

Red knights, brown bishops, bright queens

Striking the board, falling in strong "L's" of

colour,

Reaching and striking in angles,

Holding lines of one colour:





The board is alive with light

These pieces are living in form,

Their moves break and reform the pattern.

Luminous green from the rooks,

Clashing with "X's" of queens,

Looped with the knight-leaps.

"Y" pawns, cleaving, embanking,

Whirl, centripetal, mate, King down in the vortex:

Clash, leaping of bands, straight strips of

hard colour,

Blocked lights working in, escapes, renewing of

contes.<sup>99</sup>

Pound similarly describes Gaudier-Brzeska's "The Dancer" as a structured form-series "full of vitality and of energy" which "passes into stasis with the circular base or platform."<sup>100</sup>

The aim of vorticist art was the creation of a hard surface which would meet and express the convolutions of the creative energy of the artist. It is this dynamic reciprocity between the artistic volition and the artist's material that Lewis finds lacking in the art of the impressionists and in that of some of his contemporaries. The artistic volition becomes uncertain when the futurists vanish into the crowd or into their subject matter, or when the



cubists include, along with their scientific visual analysis, the habits of detachment and impersonality of the scientific laboratory. The impressionists' snapshots of the moment and the cinematographic attempts of the futurists, Lewis sees as the culmination of the naturalistic tradition, as a blurring of the distinctions between the artist's creative activity and his material:

The Artist, like Narcissus, gets his nose nearer and nearer the surface of Life.

He will get it nipped off if he is not careful, by some Peck-sniff-shark sunning its lean belly near the surface, or other lurker beneath his image, who has been feeding on its radiance.

Reality is in the artist, the image only in life, and he should only approach so near as is necessary for a good view.<sup>101</sup>

Similarly, Lewis objects to the cubist use of the posed model or posed Nature-morte as a "sign of relaxed initiative."<sup>102</sup> Instead of striving "to ENRICH abstraction till it is almost plain life, or rather to get deeply enough immersed in material life to experience the shaping power amongst its vibrations, and to accentuate and perpetuate these," the cubists "pulled Nature about with her cubes,"<sup>103</sup> laying a force-arrangement upon a naturalistic base. The result was a static portrait drawn from the inhabitants or debris of their studios: "DEAD ARRANGEMENTS BY THE TASTEFUL HAND WITHOUT, not instinctive organisations by the living will within."<sup>104</sup>

The movement to which vorticism was theoretically closely





allied--as Lewis indicates in Blast--was the expressionist group connected with Der Blaue Reiter in Munich, a group founded by Kandinsky and Franz Marc at the end of 1911. Their general aim was to return to the basic elements in painting, to rediscover the primary experience of colour and form. On the title page of the catalogue for the first Blaue Reiter exhibition in December, 1911, these painters state that "we do not seek to propagandize a single precise and special form in this small exhibition, but we aim to show in the variety of represented forms how the artist's inner desire results in manifold forms."<sup>105</sup> Kandinsky's Concerning the Spiritual in Art, described in Blast as "a most important contribution to the psychology of modern art,"<sup>106</sup> was a theoretical justification of his experiments as a painter in non-representative modes which visually project the impulses of the painter's "inner desire."

While the vorticists' emphasis on the artist's creative initiative and their exploration of the language of forms in relation to their expressive power brings them theoretically close to Kandinsky's expressionist position, there are important divergences, as is apparent in the contrast between the austere exploration of machine forms in vorticist painting and Kandinsky's "treatment of color, rich and beautiful in itself, and as if endowed with magical



qualities to carry emotion, his shapes and forms, detached and ethereal, flower-like, floating, or strong and powerful."<sup>107</sup>

Gaudier-Brzeska, reviewing the exhibition of the Allied Artists Association in the spring of 1914 at which Kandinsky exhibited, describes Kandinsky's paintings as lacking in structure and emotional depth, as "formless, vague assertions."<sup>108</sup> Lewis objects to Kandinsky's theoretical emphasis on what Lewis terms the "Blavatskyish soul"<sup>109</sup>:

Kandinsky, docile to the intuitive fluctuations of his soul, and anxious to render his hand and mind elastic and receptive, follows this unreal entity into its cloud-world, out of the material and solid universe.

He allows the Bach-like will that resides in each good artist to be made war on by the slovenly and wandering Spirit.

He allows the rigid chambers of his Brain to become a mystic house haunted by an automatic and peurile Spook; that leaves a delicate trail like a snail.<sup>110</sup>

Lewis points out that representation in some form or other is unavoidable "that the content, in detail, must be that of the material universe: that close swarming forms approach pebbles, or corn or leaves or the objects in some shop window somewhere in the world: that ample, bland forms are intrinsically either those of clouds, or spaces of masonry, or of sand deserts."<sup>111</sup>

Lewis in his "A Review of Contemporary Art" in the second issue of Blast expresses his admiration for "the great plastic qualities"<sup>112</sup> attained in cubist painting, but states that "we must recog-





nize that what produced these paintings was a marvellous enterprise and enthusiastic experimentation, and that if we are to show ourselves worthy of the lead given us by two or three great painters of the last fifteen years, we must not abate in our interrogation."<sup>113</sup> He draws attention to the vorticist preoccupation with structural principles different from those apparent in the art of their contemporaries and emphasizes the vorticist insistence on a reciprocity between the creative will and the artist's material. On this basis, Lewis makes his claim that "VORTICISM is the only word that has been used in this country and nowhere else for a certain new impulse in art."<sup>114</sup>

## VI

With the outbreak of war, vorticism as a movement virtually ended. The Rebel Art Centre closed shortly after the war began.<sup>115</sup> Plans for an extension of the Rebel Art Centre to embrace drama, music and photography in addition to the visual arts and literature, the projected College of Arts in which there was to have been an "interaction of the arts"<sup>116</sup> were equally abortive. The impetus that had led to the publication of Blast carried through to the second issue and to the exhibition of vorticist art, but the war, the enlistment of Gaudier-Brzeska, T. E. Hulme and Lewis, and



subsequent death of the former two, had the effect of cutting off the movement almost at the point of its inception: "We all of us went over into the War, and lost our 'Vortex' in it."<sup>117</sup>

Pound continued to write about vorticism during the war and to defend it in letters to editors. For a time, he assumed charge of Gaudier-Brzeska's and Lewis's work, and arranged for the sale of some paintings and pieces of sculpture to the New York collector John Quinn. In the course of collecting Lewis's paintings and drawings to send to Quinn, Pound, who had originally preferred the vorticist sculpture, records his astonishment at the range and power of Lewis's work of the period in a letter to Quinn in March, 1916:

Lewis has just sent in the first dozen drawings. They are all over the room, and the thing is stupendous. The vitality, the fullness of the man! Nobody knows it. My God, the stuff lies in a pile of dirt on the man's floor. Nobody has seen it. Nobody has any conception of the volume and energy and the variety. . . .

This is the first day for I don't know how long that I have envied any man his spending money. It seems to me that Picasso alone, certainly alone among the living artists whom I know of, is in anything like the same class. It is not merely knowledge of technique, or skill, it is intelligence and knowledge of life, of the whole of it, beauty, heaven, hell, sarcasm, every kind of whirlwind of force and emotion. Vortex. That is the right word, if I did find it myself.<sup>118</sup>

An exhibition of vorticist painting--mainly the work of Lewis--was organized by Quinn and held in New York at the Penguin Club towards the end of 1916.





Pound also paid a tribute to Gaudier-Brzeska in his study published in 1916, a compendium of material relating to Gaudier-Brzeska and a handbook on vorticism in which much of the theory underlying the movement, as Pound saw it at that time, is outlined. His examples are drawn mainly from the sculpture of Gaudier-Brzeska and Epstein and from poetry, but there would appear to be little in Pound's delineation of the movement that Lewis would then have objected to if it had been applied to vorticist painting.

During the war, the Egoist, Harriet Shaw Weaver's and Dora Marsden's the New Freewoman re-baptized during the winter of 1913-14 after Pound had "taken charge of the literature dept.,"<sup>119</sup> was used by the participants in the movement as a kind of continuation of Blast. Richard Aldington, Hilda Doolittle, and then Eliot acted as assistant editors during the war. Lewis's novel Tarr and Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man first appeared there, Pound having drawn Joyce into this particular orbit. In Gaudier-Brzeska, Pound states that

by the "movement" I mean something wider than the association of certain artists a year or so since in Ormond Street.

After an intolerable generation we find again this awakening, not in one spot but in several. Lewis, Brzeska, James Joyce, T. S. Eliot all proving independently and sporadically that the possession of a certain measure of intellect, education, enlightenment does not absolutely unfit a man for artistic composition.<sup>120</sup>



The Little Review, the avant-garde periodical started by Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap in Chicago in 1914, was for a time similarly regarded by Pound as an "official organ"<sup>121</sup> for the "men of 1914." Writing in May, 1917 when he became its foreign editor, Pound describes the Little Review, then being published from New York, as a place where he hopes that "the current prose writings of James Joyce, Wyndham Lewis, T. S. Eliot, and myself might appear regularly."<sup>122</sup> His "corner of the paper" he sees as "BLAST, but BLAST covered with ice, with a literary and reserved camouflage, . . . . BLAST in which exuberance has given place to external decorum of phrase."<sup>123</sup> The Little Review, in addition to its famous venture in printing Joyce's Ulysses, provided an outlet for much of Lewis's and Pound's prose writing during the period of Pound's foreign editorship from 1917 to 1921.

Vorticism was extended into photography during the war with the invention of the vortoscope by the American photographer, Alvin Langdon Coburn. Coburn, who had been a member of Steiglitz's photo-secession group in New York, and had come into contact with the vorticist group in London, did not see why his own medium should lag behind modern art trends, and so "aspired to make abstract pictures with the camera." He devised the vorto-





scope late in 1916, he recalls in his autobiography. This instrument, composed of three mirrors fastened together to form a triangle, acted as a prism splitting the image formed by the lens into segments. Coburn states that the objects he usually selected were pieces of wood and crystal, but one portrait was made. In each case, Coburn found the resultant patterns "all differing from each other and each possessing its own individual character and pattern."<sup>124</sup>

Pound wrote an anonymous preface to Coburn's exhibition of vortographs in February, 1917. This preface was reprinted in a modified form as an appendix to a collection of essays, Pavannes and Divisions, published the following year. Pound saw in Coburn's work a manifestation of the vorticist principle of working with the primary forms of the medium. Coburn limited himself to studies of "form (shapes on a surface) and to a light and shade; to the peculiar varieties in lightness and darkness which belong to the technique of the camera." Through the use of the vortoscope, Pound states, "THE CAMERA IS FREED FROM REALITY":

A natural object or objects may perhaps be retained realistically by the vortographer if he chooses, and the vortograph containing such an object or objects will not be injured if the object or objects contribute interest to the pattern, that is to say, if they form an integral and formal part of the whole.<sup>125</sup>

Pound saw vortography's place as



below the other vorticist arts in that it is an art of the eye, not of the eye and hand together. It stands above photography in that the vortographer combines his forms at will. He selects just what actually he wishes, he excludes the rest. He chooses what forms, lights, masses, he desires, he arranges them at will on his screen. He can make summer of London October. The aereen and submarine effects are got in his study.<sup>126</sup>

Pound regarded the vortoscope, too, as potentially saving "a lot of waste experiment on plane compositions, such as Lewis's 'Plan of War,' or the Wadsworth woodcuts."<sup>127</sup> It could serve as an instrument for technical studies and occupy "the same place in the coming aesthetic that the anatomical studies of the Renaissance had in the aesthetics of the academic school," as a device for working out definite problems in the aesthetics of form, for assisting in the possible working out of "a mathematical harmony of forms, angles, proportions, etc.," like the "mathematical 'harmony' arranged for us in music."<sup>128</sup>

After the war, a revival of vorticism as a movement in painting was attempted with the formation of the X Group, a group that consisted of ten painters--among them the painters formerly associated with the vorticist movement--and the sculptor Frank Dobson. Plans, largely instigated by the painter McKnight Kauffer, were again made to establish a centre from which point the movement could spread into the applied arts. An exhibition was held by the group in March 1920, but the centre was never established and





the group soon dispersed.

It is apparent, from a letter Lewis wrote to John Quinn in September, 1919, that he was at that time planning a revival of

Blast:

Then I am bringing out another volume of Blast (about November I expect). This will be, one half, the matter of my pamphlet: [The Caliph's Design] these theories illustrated by fifteen or twenty designs by Roberts, Etchells, Wadsworth, Turnbull, Dis-morr and myself; the other half consisting of less specific matter: a story by myself, a long, new poem by Eliot; and some other things. Pound has vanished into France and is in a mist of recuperation and romance. I have not heard from him so I don't expect he will take part in this, although he may.<sup>129</sup>

This issue of Blast never appeared, but the pamphlet he had planned to print in this issue, The Caliph's Design. Architects! Where is Your Vortex?, "a consideration of how an abstract design of direction and masses can be applied to a street or a city," was published by the Egoist Limited in October, 1919. Lewis describes this pamphlet as "an appeal to the better type of artist" to avoid "the absolute schism between him and life" afflicting the artist labouring in his studio and "to take more interest in and more part in the general life of the world" in an "attempt to change the form-content of civilized life."<sup>130</sup>

Two years later Lewis appears again as an editor of a periodical, the Tyro, which he describes as "a rallying spot" for painters and those interested in painting, and for kindred manifestations



of the New Renaissance in letters, science or music. The Tyro ran for two issues, and contained articles, reproductions of drawings, and stories by Lewis and others. Pound had by this time left England for Paris. Five years later Lewis was editing the Enemy-- in which many aspects of the literary scene including the pseudo-primitivism of Lawrence and Sherwood Anderson and the linguistic experiments of the Paris transition group, were critically examined. For the three issues Lewis himself provided most of the material.

Writing to Lewis from Paris at the time Lewis was editing the Tyro, Pound states that he "can't see that Tyro is of interest outside Bloomsbury" and that he is therefore "not inclined to re-enter." Pound announces that he "is taking up the Little Review again, as a quarterly, each number to have about twenty reproductions of ONE artist," and requests illustrations for a Lewis number. He also refers to his intention of compiling a book on "Four Modern Artists" in which he was going to include the work of Lewis, Brancusi, Picasso, and Picabia.<sup>131</sup> The only one of these plans to be carried through was an article on Brancusi which appeared in the Little Review in the autumn of 1921. This article was later republished, along with an interview of Brancusi, in a small illustrated volume in Italian in 1957. Early in 1927, Pound began to edit his own periodical, the Exile, which he describes as





"designed to deal with various matters not adequately handled elsewhere."<sup>132</sup> This periodical ended with the fourth issue in the autumn of 1928.

A memorial exhibition of Gaudier-Brzeska's sculpture was held in 1918 at the Leicester Galleries and various others followed in Italy. Gaudier-Brzeska's work recently became part of the permanent collection of modern art in the Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris. The selection displayed in the collection shows his development from the early work done under the influence of Rodin, through his period of growing formalism, to the abstract austerity of his last sculptural forms.

A retrospective exhibition of Lewis's painting, entitled "Wyndham Lewis and Vorticism," was held at the Tate Gallery in 1956. The exhibition included vorticist work done by the painters who had been associated with the movement and representative paintings selected from Lewis's entire output as a painter. William Roberts, one of the few members of the group aside from Lewis still living in England at that time, issued a series of pamphlets to register his objection to the inclusion of all of Lewis's work and the limiting of the other vorticists to the very small amount of work still in existence from the vorticist period:



Lewis is asking the public to accept him as the only Vorticist . . . . To prove his claim, a massive exhibition of his pictures has been put on at the Tate Gallery. . . . He is in effect saying that it is not the painting he did in little more than a year around 1914 as a member of the Vorticist group, but his whole output over a period of almost fifty years that is Vorticism.<sup>133</sup>

Lewis, discussing his vorticist period in the introduction to the catalogue, notes that a large oil "Revolution" is all that can be found to represent this period.<sup>134</sup>

Lewis had come back from his service in the artillery in the first world war convinced that the revolution in the visual arts had been effected and that the time of reconstruction had arrived. Writing early in 1919, he notes that

the innovations in painting, pressed everywhere before the war, have by their violence and completeness exhausted the scope of progress on that point. That America may be considered as not only discovered, but crossed and crosshatched from side to side, with the surveys and treckings of its invaders. Expressionism, Cubism, Vorticism, all these movements now have to set about construction and development, and evolve a new world of art out of the continent their enterprise has acquired.<sup>135</sup>

This discovery that had been made, Lewis points out, was not really America, but "simply the world in which we all stand and live." He is afraid that those "who insist on regarding 'modern art' as a melodrama, in which Beauty is foully done to death by a villainous figure disguised as a Cube" will "want to know when the pistol is next going off,"<sup>136</sup> and that within this climate of





expectation, there is a danger that the artists will transform themselves into world-discovering machines instead of getting the large new world that has been discovered into shape.

In the paintings displayed in Lewis's first postwar exhibition, Guns, representational elements protrude from and dominate a basic structural pattern that recalls his earlier austere abstractions. Lewis later points out that

the war was a sleep, deep and animal, in which I was visited by images of an order very new to me. Upon waking I found an altered world. . . . The geometries which had interested me so exclusively before, I now felt were bleak and empty. They wanted filling.<sup>137</sup>

In the introduction to the catalogue of his exhibition, Guns, Lewis defends the painter's right to follow his own impulses rather than the fashionable formula:

The public, surprised at finding eyes and noses in this exhibition, will begin by the reflection that the artist has conceded nature, and abandoned those vexing diagrams by which he puzzled and annoyed. The case is really not quite that. All that has happened is that in these things the artist has set himself a different task. . . . I never associated myself with the jejune folly that would assert one week that a Polynesian totem was the only formula by which the mind of man--Modern Man, heaven help him!--might be expressed: the next, that only in some compromise between Ingres and the Chinese the golden rule of self-expression might be found. . . .

I have attempted here only one thing. . . a series dealing with the gunner's life from his arrival in the depot to his life in the Line.<sup>138</sup>



Lewis had stated in the second issue of Blast that he thought "a great deal of effort will automatically flow back into more natural forms from the barriers of the Abstract."<sup>139</sup>

Two other artists associated with the vorticist movement also turned away from their experiments with abstract forms immediately after the war. Jacob Epstein looked back on the period of his association with the vorticist movement as a period of useful but limited experimentation:

In reviewing this period and its concern with abstract forms, I cannot see that sculptors who took up abstraction later and used it made any advance on the 1913-14 period, or produced more novel forms. . . . Actual movement is not novel either, for I had thought of attaching pneumatic power to my rock-drill, and setting it in motion, thus completing every potentiality of form and movement in one single work. All this I realised was really child's play. . . . This kind of excitement is far removed from the nature of the aesthetic experience and satisfaction that sculpture should give. In our attempts to extend the range of sculpture we are led into extravagance and puerility. . . . When I returned to a normal manner of working, and was so bold as again to carve and model a face with its features, the advanced critics spoke of my having "thrown in the sponge." I was lost to the movement. I feel easy about this. The discipline of simplification of form, unity of design, and co-ordination of masses is all to the good, and I think their discipline has influenced me in my later work. . . . But to think of abstraction as an end in itself is undoubtedly letting oneself be led into a cul-de-sac, and can only lead to exhaustion and impotence.<sup>140</sup>





The futurist painter, Nevinson, also recounts in his autobiography his return from war similarly convinced that experimentation with abstract forms was "a cul-de-sac from which there was no escape."<sup>141</sup> John Rothenstein describes Nevinson's career after 1916 as a "slow decline" and suggests that his discovery that war was not as the futurists had described it and his renunciation of his cubist training were not unrelated:

In representing with such directness, starkness and force, and with such particular insight, his early experience of the war, Nevinson was, as it were, expending his Futurist and Cubist capital. He was a simple man. The effect of the shock of discovery that war was not the mechanized Wagner, all thunder and speed, was not "the hygienics of the world," was to shatter his faith not only in the Futurist glorification of war and in Futurism itself, but, by association, in Cubism--in fact, in the entire revolutionary spirit in the arts.<sup>142</sup>

The other members of the vorticist group of painters went in diverse directions. Etchells gave up painting shortly after the war to become an ecclesiastical architect. In the early 1920's he and an associate set up a printing press which issued reproductions of rare first editions. Wadsworth, who had earlier studied engineering in Munich and whose intense interest in machinery and in the industrial landscape is manifest in his vorticist drawings, continued for a period after the war as a painter of industry. John Rothenstein has described Wadsworth's drawings of this period as "remarkable both for the hard logic of their designing and for





the immediacy and the sureness with which the vastness and the blighted gloom of the region, the over-whelming energy and scale of the whole industrial process, has been seized."<sup>143</sup> Wadsworth later passed through a surrealist phase. He participated in the English abstract movements of the 20's and 30's, and became a member of the Unit One group during the 30's. Jessie Dismorr, also turned in the 30's to further experimentation in abstract forms. William Roberts evolved shortly after the vorticist period an individual style which has remained constant, a style marked by a peculiar kind of claustrophobic power--the typical gesture, a single impulse emanating from a community of puppet-like creatures held stationary within a carefully enclosed framework. Ronald Alley points out in his introduction to the catalogue of Roberts's recent retrospective exhibition at the Tate Gallery that

every gesture, every action, however still and puppet-like, has the authentic flavour of life and helps to spell out some aspect of the theme in a kind of dumb-show. The scenes are often rich in humorously or satirically observed incident and contain a certain degree of distortion and even caricature: grimacing faces, gesticulating hands combine with the bold colours and strong designs to make each picture a positive, memorable statement. There is on the one hand a tendency towards the grotesque, on the other a classical concern with design and structure. The compositions, frequently crowded with figures, are worked out with astonishing lucidity and completeness, so that every part is rendered in crisp detail; and the design spreads right out to the edge of the picture, as if there was a horror vacui, a compulsion to fill the entire picture area.<sup>144</sup>





Lewis's later comments on vorticism vary with the context.

Considering vorticism solely as a movement in painting, he looks back on it as a period of notable achievement:

It was, after all, a new civilization that I--and a few other people--were making the blueprints for: these things never being more than that. A rough design for a way of seeing for men who as yet were not there. At the time I was unaware of the full implication of my work, but that was what I was doing. I, like all the other people in Europe so engaged, felt it to be an important task. It was more than just picture-making: one was manufacturing fresh eyes for people, and fresh souls to go with the eyes.<sup>145</sup>

Writing in the Architectural Review in 1934 in an article entitled

"Plain Home-builder: Where is your Vorticist?," Lewis describes the vorticists and their contemporaries as propelled by the sense of a "necessity to reform de fond en comble the world in which a picture must exist:

"Vorticism" was a movement initiated by a group of painters, but it was aimed essentially at an architectural reform. . . . My pamphlet entitled Architects, where is your Vortex?. . . demonstrates this fact sufficiently plainly even in its title. And what I, as a vorticist, was saying to the architect was: "Produce a shell more in conformity with the age in which we live! If you do not do so, it will be in vain for us to produce pictures of a new and contemporary nature.

But the pictures produced by myself, and other painters of similar aims, and which have been produced continuously since that time, were often rather exercises in architectural theory--rather pictorial spells, as it were, cast by us, designed to attract the architectural shell that was wanting--than anything else.<sup>146</sup>

Lewis, many years after Blast appeared, describes vorticism as "purely a painters affair (as imagism was a purely literary movement, having no relation whatever to vorticism, nor anything





in common with it)."<sup>147</sup> In the introduction to his retrospective exhibition at the Tate in 1956, Lewis claims that "vorticism, in fact, was what I, personally, did, and said, at a certain period."<sup>148</sup> Those of his vorticist associates who were not painters, the two sculptors and the imagist poets, Lewis elsewhere describes as pompier, as men still attached to the traditions of a past that the visual revolution was dedicated to overthrowing.

Insofar as vorticism was a group movement, Lewis regarded it in retrospect with less satisfaction. He disliked the suggestion of many voices speaking in unison that adheres to the concept of the group:

It was scarcely our fault that we were a youth racket. It was Ezra who in the first place organized us willy nilly into that. For he was never satisfied until everything was organized. And it was he who made us into a youth-racket--that was his method of organization. He had a streak of Baden-Powell in him, had Ezra, perhaps more than a streak. With Disraeli, he thought in terms of "Young England." He never got us under canvas it is true--we were not the most promising material for Ezra's boyscoutery. But he did succeed in giving a handful of disparate and unassimilable people this appearance of a Bewegung. . . .

But Ezra was not a politician de metier, and his racket was merely an art-racket.<sup>149</sup>

Lewis found objectionable the reflection he saw in the concept of avant-garde movements in the arts of both the syndicalist concept in political theory, and the concept of scientific advance which, inappropriately used as a model for the arts, would lead to a continuous succession of avant-garde movements. While in The





Writer and the Absolute, he describes imagism and vorticism as "craft-groups, with no political implications--except insofar as all revolution in literature or art involves a radical bias, especially if it takes a group form,"<sup>150</sup> he appears to have felt after returning from the first world war that there had been too much of the Zeitgeist intermingled with the vorticists' blasting activities. He found the areas of unanimity between the vorticists' activities and ideas and impulses in the surrounding culture too numerous to have been accidental:

It is somewhat depressing to consider how as an artist one is always holding the mirror up to politics without knowing it. My picture called "The Plan of War" painted six months before the Great War "broke out," as we say, depresses me. A prophet is a most unoriginal person: all he is doing is imitating something that is not there, but soon will be. With me war and art have been mixed from the start.<sup>151</sup>

This suspicion that for him "war and art have been mixed up from the start" appears to have been one of the causes for his long period of seclusion after the war and his subsequent determination that every work of art "should be asked to account for itself in the abstract terms that are behind its phenomenal face."<sup>152</sup>

He continued to regard the basic impulse behind vorticism as rightly directed:



The vorticist, cubist and expressionist movements. . . which aimed at a renewal of our artistic sensibility, and to provide it with a novel alphabet of shapes and colours with which to express itself, presupposed a new human ethos, which undoubtedly must have superseded, in some measure, modes of feeling of a merely national order.<sup>153</sup>

He saw a continuation of the vorticist movement in the work of the men of "1914," Pound, Eliot, Joyce and himself--"a heterogeneous undisciplined though dashing militia."<sup>154</sup>

Pound, whom Lewis has described as a "revolutionary simpleton" who never realized that to be strictly revolutionary might be to call revolution itself into question, never wavered in his attachment to the vorticist principles and practice. In Canto VII--Pound's valedictory to England written at the time of his departure--Pound pays a tribute to his vorticist associates, and mourns the death of Gaudier-Brzeska and the dissipation of the vorticist form-creating impulse in the "shimmer of rain-blur":

And the life goes on, mooning upon bare hills;

Flame leaps from the hand, the rain is listless,

Yet drinks the thirst from our lips,

solid as echo,

Passion to breed a form in shimmer of rain-blur;

But Eros drowned, drowned, heavy, half dead with tears

For dead Sicheus.<sup>155</sup>





Like Lewis, Pound continued to see in the particular stream of modern art to which vorticism belonged the sole basis for a cultural renewal:

Jungle:

Glaze green and red feathers, jungle,

Basis of renewal, renewals;

Rising over the soul, green virid, of the jungle,

Lozenge of the pavement, clear shapes,

Broken, disrupted, body eternal,

Wilderness of renewals, confusion

Basis of renewals, subsistence,

Glazed green of the jungle.<sup>156</sup>

Pound became acquainted in Paris with many other artists whom he saw as directed by the same impulse towards renewal as the vorticists--Brancusi, Fernand Léger, Jean Cocteau, Arp, and Picabia, and the composer, George Antheil. The latter Pound for a time described as a "vorticist" musician. The vorticist meeting place, the Dieudonné, takes its place in the later cantos as one among many restaurants which similarly were used as focal points for a group:



opinion in 1924

Sirdar, Bouiller and Les Lilas,

or Dieudonné London, or Voisin's,

Uncle George stood like a statesman 'PEI ANTA

fills up every hollow

the cake shops in the Nevsky, and Schöners

not to mention der Greif at Bolsano la patronne getting  
older

Mouquin's or Robert's 40 years after

and La Marquise de Pierre had never before met  
an American.<sup>157</sup>

Pound claims, however, in an essay in the Criterion in 1937, that a great deal of Paris was chronologically later than the London of 1914: "So unmoving was the air in the French parlour and dining room that Aragon's generation doesn't get to know that at a given date the French were missing a train already gone from the Ormond St. and Kensington junction."<sup>158</sup> Pound notes in the same essay that

just as Gaudier got a great deal of what he intended to say into The Embracers, so without anyone's much suspecting it Lewis got a great deal more of a world-map of his own intentions into those two volumes of Blast, than anyone has taken the trouble to notice.

These were the intentions of an already consummate combiner of forms, of a man who had mastered the relation of volumes in an art which has actually only two dimensions as its field of expression.<sup>159</sup>





While in his Guide to Kulchur Pound describes vorticism along with dadaism as movements primarily important as blasting operations directed against the debris of a previous civilization, as part of the preparation for the new totalitarian synthesis yet to come, he notes elsewhere around the same time that "BLAST was regarded as a manifesto, as an action, which it was, but [that] an excessive preoccupation with that particular part of its function has obscured the more durable elements."<sup>160</sup> He affirms later in the Pisan Cantos that "Gaudier's word [is] not blacked out/nor old Hulme's, nor Wyndham's."<sup>161</sup>

Like Lewis, Pound came to see vorticism as part of a revolution that had failed:

and will the world ever take up its course again?

very confidentially I ask you: will it?

with Dieudonné dead and buried

not even a wall, or Mouquin, or Voisin or the cake shops

in the Nevsky<sup>162</sup>

He regarded Lewis's partial renunciation of his experimental work with regret. Writing in 1930, he states that

few plastic artists have been strong enough to depend on form alone, dispensing with the stimulus or support of a literary content. Brancusi still keeps this faith. In England the courage reached its known maximum in the period 1911 to 1914 as shown in the work of Wyndham Lewis, Gaudier, and in a few works of



Epstein (those with the suavest outlines, the simplest combination of mass). In drawings, this movement, so far as the general public knows, passed out of English work with Lewis' artillery designs, where he was forced to include a narrative or at least literary content but still held firm the original direction of his will. (His present work is not sufficiently known either to me or to the public to serve me as illustration.)<sup>163</sup>

Repeatedly Pound complains in Thrones that "the lot of 'em, Yeats, Possum, old Wyndham/had no ground to stand on."<sup>164</sup>

What has remained within the culture of the initial impulse towards renewal is an illusionary revolution--"beneath the jazz, a cortex, a stiffness or stillness/Shell of the older house"<sup>165</sup>; a perverted transformation,

(Let us speak of the osmosis of persons)

The wail of the phonograph has penetrated their marrow

(Let us. . .

The wail of the pornograph. . . .)<sup>166</sup>;

and the voice from the stone pits,

'Sero, sero. . .

'Nothing we made, we set nothing in order,

'Neither house nor the carving,

'And what we thought had been thought for too long;

'Our opinion not opinion in evil

'But opinion borne for too long.

'We have gathered a sieve full of water.'<sup>167</sup>





Just as Lewis regarded vorticist painting as a spell designed to attract the architect's attention, Pound similarly assigned to the painter the role of creative instigator. Writing in 1922, he states that

Alberti gives me a clue which twelve years among contemporary artists had not offered me. . . . Alberti, a very great architect and not particularly well-known painter, says in his praise of painting in the Trattato della Pintura that the architect gets his idea from the painter, that the painter stirs the desire for beautiful building. One has but to recall the backgrounds of Quattrocento painting to see the sense of the remark. The painter begins with himself. . . . If he cannot build he at any rate registers a precise ideal of beauty. This passion ran into, I think, the eighteenth century. One finds rare collections of huge engravings, architectural designs no one could possibly pay to build, but which the designer hoped to see at least on the theatre stage.<sup>168</sup>

In Canto 8, published in the same year, he requests that the "Maestro di pentore" be told

That there can be no question of  
His painting the walls for the moment,  
As the mortar is not yet dry  
And it wd be merely work chucked away  
(buttato via)<sup>169</sup>

There are several other painters in the Cantos whose work is impeded in varying ways. In Canto 3, Mantegna's medium is unstable:

Drear waste, the pigment flakes from the stone,  
Or plaster flakes, Mantegna painted the wall.  
Silk tatters, 'Nec Spe Nec Metu.'<sup>170</sup>



In Canto 25, Titian is chastised by the city councillors, and threatened with a loss of income, because he has left a painting of a land-battle unfinished on the "fourth frame from the door on/ the right of the hall of the greater council." This is, Titian complains the

. . . side toward the piazza, the worst side of the room  
that no one has been willing to tackle,  
and do it as cheap or much cheaper.

(signed) Tician, 31 May 1513.

The councillors complain that "its being thus /unfinished holds up the decoration of said hall on the side that everyone sees."<sup>171</sup> In the following canto, another painter writes to the Marquis of Mantova concerning a piece of a painting that has been stolen:

illustrious m.lord, I am  
that painter to the Seignory, commissioned to paint the  
gt. hall where Yr Lordship deigns to mount  
on the scaffold to see our work, the history of Ancona,  
and my name is Victor Carpatio.

As to the Jerusalem I dare say there is not another  
in our time as good and completely perfect, or as  
large. It is 25 ft. long by 5 1/2, and I know Zuane  
Zamberti has often spoken of it to yr Sublimity, I





know certainly that this painter of yours has carried  
off a piece, not the whole of it.<sup>172</sup>

The new city--in the Cantos, the city of Dioce "whose terraces are the colour of stars"<sup>173</sup>--to which Lewis had directed the attention of artists in The Caliph's Design--is in the Cantos portrayed as taking shape "in the mind indestructible," after having been four times rebuilt:

4 times was the city rebuildd, Hooo Fasa

Gassir, Hooo Fasa deu'italia tradita

now in the mind indestructible, Gassir, Hooo Fasa,

With the four giants at the four corners

and four gates mid-wall Hooo Fasa

and a terrace the colour of stars

pale as the dawn cloud, la luna

thin as Demeter's hair

Hooo Fasa, and in a dance the renewal

with the two larks in contrappunto

at sunset

ch'intererisce

a sinistra la Torre

seen through a pair of breeches.<sup>174</sup>



In Canto 90, Diocē begins to acquire some of its permanent contours in an uncertain location, somewhat remote from the gea terra. The architect now responds to the painter's message:

The architect from the painter,

the stone under elm

Taking form now,

the rilievi,

the curled stone at the marge

Faunus, sirenes,

the stone taking form in the air

ac ferae,

cervi,

the great cats approaching.<sup>175</sup>





## PART TWO

### WITHIN THE VORTEX



I "All arts approach the conditions of music"

Pound provides an outline of the origins of vorticist theory in the first issue of Blast:

ANCESTRY

"All arts approach the conditions of music." --  
Pater

"An Image is that which presents an intellectual  
and emotional complex in an instant of time." --  
Pound

"You are interested in a certain painting because  
it is an arrangement of lines and colours." -- Whistler

Picasso, Kandinsky, father and mother, classicism and romanticism of the movement.<sup>1</sup>

Pound appears to have derived the above quotation from Pater from Pater's essay on "The School of Giorgione."<sup>2</sup> In this essay, Pater presents a general theory relating to the formal elements of art, capable, he suggests, of universal application in the arts. Noting that each art has its own special responsibilities to its material, Pater defines the special mode of painting as a creative handling of pure line and colour: "In its primary aspect, a great picture has no more definite message for us than an accidental play of sunlight and shadow for a few moments on the wall or floor: is itself, in truth, a space of such fallen light, caught as the colors are in an





Eastern carpet, but refined upon, and dealt with more subtly and exquisitely than by nature itself."<sup>3</sup> Pater notes that in the special handling of its material "each art may be observed to pass into the condition of some other art, by what German critics term an Anders-streben--a partial alienation from its own limitations, through which the arts are able, not indeed to supply the place of each other, but reciprocally, to lend each other new forces."<sup>4</sup> In this process of alienation from its own medium, all art is "aspiring toward the principle of music; music being the typical, or ideally consummate art, the object of the great Anders-streben of all art" in which art's constant struggle to obliterate the distinctions between matter and form, "to become a matter of pure perception, to get rid of its responsibilities to its subject or material"<sup>5</sup> is resolved, and the form, the mode of handling, penetrates the matter to the point of total fusion.

Elements of the same theory Pater presents recur in Whistler's statements on painting. Pater's general theory, in which he has tried to isolate a universal area of aesthetic appeal, becomes in Whistler a theory presented in defence of his own particular kind of paintings--paintings he describes as rhythmic arrangements of line, form and colour. These rhythmic arrangements he intends to be regarded per se rather than in terms of any reference they



might make to external phenomena. Whistler condemns illusionist art as an excursion into areas foreign to the aesthetic impulse:

Art should be independent of all claptrap, should stand alone and appeal to the artistic sense of eye or ear without confounding this with emotions entirely foreign to it.

The imitator is a poor kind of creature. If the man who paints only the tree, or flower, or other surface he sees before him were an artist, the king of artists would be the photographer. It is for the artist to do something beyond this in portrait painting, to put on canvas something more than the face the model wears for that day; to paint the man, in short, as well as his features; in arrangement of colours to treat a flower as his key, not as his model.<sup>6</sup>

Pound, in his presentation of the vorticist aesthetic in Gaudier-Brzeska, applauds Whistler as "the great grammarian of the arts"<sup>7</sup> and claims that Whistler was the only man working in England in the 'eighties who would have understood what the vorticists were attempting. Pound cites approvingly Whistler's observation that "nature contains the elements" and that "the artist is born to pick and choose, and group with science, these elements, that the result may be beautiful--as the musician gathers his notes and forms his chords."<sup>8</sup> This, according to Pound, is a description that can be applied to vorticist art. The vorticists seek in their various media a "musical" art form in which the meaning would be inseparable from the arrangement of component primary forms. Lewis, writing later about the





vorticist style in painting, sees it as the product of a desire to find an abstract pictorial language that would "exclude from painting the everyday visual real":

The idea was to build up a visual language as abstract as music. The colour green would not be confined, or related, to what was green in nature--such as grass, leaves, etc.; in the matter of form, a shape represented by fish remained a form independent of the animal, and could be made use of in a universe in which there were no fish.<sup>9</sup>

The mechanics of this musical art Kandinsky describes in Concerning the Spiritual in Art. The discussion is transferred here from the area of pure aesthetics, to which Pater restricts himself, to the processes of cognition in general. Kandinsky, examining the component elements of painting, finds that colour and form have in themselves a resonance, an ability to call forth psychological responses. Beyond the immediate physical impact of colour lies a capacity to provoke a distinct psychological effect: "As the physical coldness of ice, upon penetrating more deeply, arouses more complex feelings, and indeed a whole chain of psychological experiences, so may also the superficial impression of colour develop into an experience."<sup>10</sup> Similarly, every form, including the abstract geometrical forms, has "its spiritual perfume," is, in itself, "a subjective substance in an objective sheath."<sup>11</sup>



These resonant colours and forms, Kandinsky states, can be arranged to form a pure expression of emotion analogous to the expressive arrangement in music which "for some centuries . . . has devoted itself not to the reproduction of natural phenomena, but to the expression of the artist's soul and to the creation of an autonomous life of musical sound."<sup>12</sup> Painting, following the model of music, can extend its potential powers beyond an "imitation of nature with a practical function (for example, a portrait in the ordinary sense) or an intuition of nature involving a certain interpretation (e. g., "impressionist" painting) or an inner feeling expressed by nature's forms (as we say, a picture of "mood")."<sup>13</sup> Playing upon the soul directly, "the piano with many strings," using colour and form as his keyboard, the senses being the hammers, the artist can purposively touch one key or another, causing direct "vibrations in the soul"<sup>14</sup> dependent upon no other resources nor appeals to associative ideas external to the work of art.

The establishing of this keyboard upon which pure emotion can be played Pound sees as the aim of the vorticists. They are searching for the primary forms, the equations for human emotions-- the pattern of images and musical phrases, lines and colours, or arrangements of masses and line on planes that will be the exact equivalent to the psychological complex of ideas and emotions they





wish to express. "I SHALL DERIVE MY EMOTIONS SOLELY FROM THE ARRANGEMENT OF SURFACES," Gaudier-Brzeska states. "I shall present my emotions," he continues, "by the ARRANGEMENTS OF MY SURFACES, THE PLANES AND LINES BY WHICH THEY ARE DEFINED:"

Just as this hill where the Germans are solidly entrenched, gives me a nasty feeling, solely because its gentle slopes are broken up by earthworks, which throw long shadows at sunset. Just so shall I get feeling, of whatsoever definition, from a statue ACCORDING TO ITS SLOPES, varied to infinity.

I have made an experiment. Two days ago I pinched from an enemy a mauser rifle. Its heavy unwieldy shape swamped me with a powerful IMAGE of brutality.

I was in doubt for a long time whether it pleased or displeased me.

I found that I did not like it.

I broke the butt off with my knife I carved in it a design, through which I tried to express a gentler order of feeling, which I preferred.

BUT I WILL EMPHASIZE that MY DESIGN got its effect (just as the gun had) FROM A VERY SIMPLE COMPOSITION OF LINES AND PLANES.<sup>15</sup>

Lewis later describes his abstract drawings from the vorticist period as magical gestures, arrangements of lines and forms upon the face of which is written the artist's emotion and patterns of thinking:

The way those things were done. . . is that a mental-emotive impulse--by this is meant subjective intellection, like magic or religion--is let loose upon a lot of blocks and lines of various dimensions, and encouraged to push them around and to arrange them as it will. It is of course not an accidental, isolated, mood: but it is recurrent groups of emotions and coagulations of thinking. . . that are involved.<sup>16</sup>





Poetry, Pound describes as "a sort of inspired mathematics, which gives us equations, not for abstract figures, triangles, spheres, and the like, but equations for the human emotions":<sup>17</sup>

You wish to communicate an idea and its concomitant emotions, or an emotion and its concomitant ideas, or a sensation and its derivative emotions, or an impression that is emotive. . . . You begin with the yeowl and the bark, and you develop into the dance and into music, and into music with words, and finally into words with music, and finally into words with a vague adumbration of music, words suggestive of music, words measured, or words in a rhythm that preserves some accurate trait of the emotive impression, or of the sheer character of the fostering or parental emotion.

When this rhythm, or when the vowel and consonantal melody or sequence seems truly to bear the trace of emotion which the poem. . . is intended to communicate, we say that this part of the work is good. And "this part of the work" is by now "technique." That "dry, dull, pedantic" technique that all bad artists rail against. It is only a part of technique, it is rhythm, cadence, and an arrangement of sounds.

Also the "prose," the words and their sense must be such as fit the emotion. Or, from the other side, ideas, or fragments of ideas, the emotion and concomitant emotions of this "Intellectual and Emotional Complex". . . must be in harmony, they must form an organism, they must be an oak sprung from an acorn.<sup>18</sup>

In the same way as the painter uses colour and form, the poet uses the "absolute rhythm which corresponds exactly to the emotion or shade of emotion to be expressed"<sup>19</sup> and the image, the radiant node which is the expression of an "intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time,"<sup>20</sup> an "equation. . . about sea, cliffs, night, having something to do with mood."<sup>21</sup> "The image," Pound notes, "is the poet's pigment; with that in mind, you can go ahead and apply Kandinsky, you can transpose his chap-





ter on the language of form and colour and apply it to the writing of verse."<sup>22</sup>

The work of art Kandinsky sees as an outer form, an existent in an objective world which has assumed the shape of the artist's emotion:

In order that the inner element, which at first exists only as an emotion, may develop into a work of art, the second element, i.e. the outer, is used as an embodiment. Emotion is always seeking means of expression, a material form, a form that is able to stir the senses. The determining and vital element is the inner one, which controls the outer form.<sup>23</sup>

The senses provide the bridge between both the artist's emotion and the work of art, and the work of art and the observer. The observer's emotional response to the work of art and the artist's original emotional response are equivalent "to the extent that the work of art is successful."<sup>24</sup> Eliot, in his formulation of the objective correlative, reproduces Kandinsky's argument: "The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding the 'objective correlative'; in other words a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience are given, the emotion is immediately evoked."<sup>25</sup> Pound in his early essay on Dante had described the landscapes of The Divine Comedy as objective equivalents of mental states:





There is little doubt that Dante conceived the real Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise as states, and not places. Richard St. Victor had, some while before, voiced this belief, and it is, moreover, a part of the esoteric and mystic dogma. For the purposes of art and popular religion it is more convenient to deal with such matters objectively; this also was most natural in an age wherein it was the poetic convention to personify abstractions, thoughts, and the spirits of the eyes and senses, and indeed nearly everything that could be regarded as an object, an essence, or a quality.<sup>26</sup>

Hulme notes that "the idealists analyse space into a mode of arranging sensations." This results in "an unimaginable world existing all at a point." He suggests that "the reverse process" be tried, that "all ideas (purely mental states)" be put "into terms of space (landscape thinking)."<sup>27</sup> Gleizes and Metzinger, in their essay Cubism, which was published in translation in England in 1913, note that "because all plastic qualities guarantee a built-in emotion, and because every emotion certifies a concrete existence, it is enough for a picture to be well painted to assure us of its author's veracity, and that our intellectual [intellectif] effort will be rewarded."<sup>28</sup>

Pound sees in the discovery of this sensual bridge or objective correlative the common origin of both myth and art:

The first myths arose when a man walked sheer into "nonsense," that is to say, when some very vivid and undeniable adventure befell him, and he told someone else who called him a liar. Thereupon, after bitter experience, perceiving that no one could understand what he meant when he said he "turned into a tree" he made a myth--a work of art that is--an impersonal or objective story woven out of his own emotion, as the nearest equa-





tion he was capable of putting into words. That story, perhaps, then gave rise to a weaker copy of his emotion in others, until there arose a cult, a company of people who could understand each other's nonsense about the gods.<sup>29</sup>

The image, through which the objective sight of the poet is conveyed, "the solid, 'the last atom of force verging off into the first atom of matter',"<sup>30</sup> mirrors the natural object as it appears directly to the senses. The "natural object" is "always the adequate symbol":<sup>31</sup>

I believe that the proper and perfect symbol is the natural object, that if a man uses "symbols," he must so use them that their symbolic function does not obtrude; so that a sense, and the poetic quality of the passage, is not lost to those who do not understand the symbol as such, to whom, for instance, a hawk is a hawk.<sup>32</sup>

These images are not to be used as signs referring to ideas or as any part of an abstract system which moves beyond or apart from them:

The image is the poet's pigment. The painter should use his colour because he sees it or feels it. I don't much care whether he is representative or non-representative. He should depend, of course, on the creative, not upon the mimetic or representational part in his work. It is the same in writing poems, the author must use his image because he sees it or feels it, not because he thinks he can use it to back up some creed or some system of ethics and economics.<sup>33</sup>

Also rejected is the use of the image as part of the private internal logic of poetry:

Imagism is not symbolism. The symbolists dealt in "association," that is, in a sort of allusion, almost of allegory. They degraded the symbol of the status of a word. They made it a form of metonymy. One can be grossly "symbolic," for example, by





using the word "cross" to mean "trial." The symbolist's sym-  
bols have a fixed value, like numbers in arithmetic, like 1, 2  
 and 7. The imagiste's images have a variable significance like  
 the signs a, b, and x in algebra.

. . . . .

The painters realize that what matters is form and colour.  
 Musicians long ago learned that programme music was not the  
 ultimate music. Almost anyone can realize that to use a symbol  
 with an ascribed or intended meaning is, usually, to produce very  
 bad art. We all remember crowns, and crosses, and rainbows,  
 and what not in atrociously mumbled colour.<sup>34</sup>

These translucent images are joined together to form the  
 work of art. The effect is derived from the arrangement of images  
 as "planes in relation," and is analogous to the effect achieved in  
 music where the meaning does not adhere to the single note per se  
 but arises from the note's positioning and interrelation with all the  
 other notes within the structure, from the pitch and intervals that  
 define both its movement and identity:

The pine-tree in mist upon the far hill looks like a fragment  
 of Japanese armour.

The beauty of this pine-tree in the mist is not caused by its  
 resemblance to the plates of armour.

The armour, if it be beautiful at all, is not beautiful because  
 of its resemblance to the pine in the mist.

In either case the beauty, in so far as it is beauty of form,  
 is the result of "planes in relation."

The tree and the armour are beautiful because their diverse  
 planes overlies in a certain manner.

. . . . .

The artist, working in words only, may cast on the reader's  
 mind, a more vivid image of either the armour or the pine by men-  
 tioning them close together or by using some device of simile or  
 metaphor, that is a legitimate procedure of his art, for he works  
 not by planes or with colours but with the names of objects and of  
 properties.<sup>35</sup>





In the process of naming described here, the emerging meaning is inseparable from the structure, the patterning and juxtaposing of images and sounds.

According to this theory, the work of art does not transmit a coded photograph of the external world nor present a particular ideological structure. Nor does it appeal to any esoteric aesthetic faculty, its forms reverberating with a recondite significance.

("There is Mr. Roger Fry, in the company of his friend, Mr. Bell, sustaining delightedly shock after shock from the handles of some electric machine";<sup>36</sup> Lewis observes.) These particular forms act within the complex field which is the moment of perception at "the precise instant when a thing outward and objective transforms itself, or darts into a thing inward and subjective,"<sup>37</sup> directly upon the organs of perception themselves.



## II "Reality is in the artist"

Wilhelm Worringer in his Abstraction and Empathy--a book which had been first published in 1908 and had immediately become, as Worringer himself described it, "an 'Open Sesame' for the formulation of a whole range of questions important for the epoch"<sup>38</sup>--finds in the "artistic volition" or "will to form" the impulse underlying all artistic creation:

Riegl was the first to introduce into the method of art historical investigation the concept of "artistic volition." By "absolute artistic volition" is to be understood the latent inner demand which exists per se, entirely independent of the object and of the mode of creation, and behaves as will to form. It is the primary factor in all artistic creation, and, in its innermost essence, every work of art is simply an objectification of this, a priori existent absolute artistic volition.<sup>39</sup>

This emphasis on the artist's self-projection or "will to form" is an integral part of all of the modernist art theories. Kandinsky claims that "emotion is always seeking means of expression, a material form, a form that is able to stir the senses" and sees the inner impulse as "the determining vital element. . . which controls the outer form, just as an idea in the mind determines the words we use, and not vice versa."<sup>40</sup> The artist therefore is "not only justified in using, but is under a moral obligation to use, only those forms which fulfill his own need." He has an





"absolute freedom" in the choice of the means by which his "will to form" creates its externalization.<sup>41</sup> Guillaume Apollinaire in his essay on the cubist painters notes that "cubism differs from the old schools of painting in that it aims, not at an act of imitation, but at an art of conception, which tends to rise to the height of creation."<sup>42</sup>

This emphasis on the artist's active self is apparent as well in the vorticists' statements. Both Lewis and Pound characterize the vorticist artist as an artist who makes use of the creative rather than the mimetic faculty. This creative faculty produces "order giving vibrations"<sup>43</sup> rather than the illusionist imitations of the naturalist tradition. Pound notes in his essay on vorticism in the Fortnightly Review that

there are two opposed ways of thinking of man: firstly, you may think of him as that towards which perception moves, as the toy of circumstance, as the plastic substance receiving impressions; secondly, you may think of him as directing a certain fluid force against circumstances, as conceiving instead of merely reflecting and observing. One does not claim that one way is better than the other; one notes a diversity of the temperament. The two camps always exist.<sup>44</sup>

Lewis in The Caliph's Design similarly observes that the artist can adopt one of two possible attitudes towards the external world:

An artist can Interpret or he can Create. There is for him, according to his temperament, and kind, the alternative of the Receptive attitude or the Active and Changing One.<sup>45</sup>



The vorticists place in the one camp, futurism, which they describe as an accelerated impressionism in which a preference for a sensual response to the moment of experience dissipates the artistic will; in the other, their own intensive art that they see as the product of a sustained direction of the will, a conscious structuring of experience. "Will and consciousness are our VORTEX,"<sup>46</sup> Gaudier-Brzeska proclaims. Epstein's "Rock Drill," with "its nerve-like figure perched on the machinery, with its straining to one purpose," Lewis describes as "a vivid illustration of the greatest function of life."<sup>47</sup> The vorticist sculptors cut directly into their material and create sculptural forms in which "every inch is won at the point of the chisel."<sup>48</sup>

Gaudier-Brzeska's association of will and consciousness is a significant one. As many critics have pointed out, the initial impulse in modern art was an analytic, highly conscious impulse. Kandinsky, viewing the new image-structures around him in 1912, prophesies that the art of the future will be characterized by an element of conscious control:

In my opinion, we are fast approaching a time of reasoned and conscious composition, in which the painter will be proud to declare his work constructional--this in contrast to the claims of the impressionists that they could explain nothing, that their art came by inspiration. We have before us an age of conscious creation.<sup>49</sup>





The cubists, Gleizes and Metzinger, also attack the impressionist pursuit of sensation to the neglect of intellect:

The art of the Impressionists involves an absurdity; by diversity of color it tries to create life, yet its drawing is feeble and worthless. A dress shimmers, marvellous; forms disappear, atrophied. Here. . .the retina predominates over the brain; they were aware of this, and to justify themselves, gave credit to the incompatibility of the intellectual faculties and artistic feeling.

In contrast to the impressionists, Gleizes and Metzinger affirm that "the visible world only becomes the real world by operation of thought."<sup>50</sup>

Like the cubists, the vorticists define the artistic volition not in terms of a mechanical response to a stimulation of the retina or of the vitalist dynamic impulse that dominated futurist thinking and led to their exaltation of war and sport, but as an intelligent highly-conscious direction of the will informing the total structure of the work of art. Pound notes that "art comes from intellect stirred by will, impulse, emotion, but art is emphatically not any of these others deprived of intellect." Lewis registers his objection to Kandinsky's theory of the direct communication of emotion in the second issue of Blast where he draws attention to the fact that the processes of selection and conception operate at the moment of perception:



My soul has gone to live in my eyes, and like a bold young lady it lolls in those sunny windows. Colours and forms can therefore have no direct effect on it. . . .

The eyes are animals, and bask in an absurd contentment everywhere.

They will never forget that red is the colour of blood, though it may besides that have a special property of exasperation.

They have a great deal of the coldness of a cat, its supposed falsity and certain passion.

But they like heat and the colour yellow because it warms them; the chemicals in the atmosphere that are good for the gloss of their fur move them deeply; and the "soul" sentimentalizes them just so much as it may without causing their hair to drop out.

This being so, the moonlight and moon-rack of ultra-pure art or anything else too pure "se serait trompe de guichet" if it sought to move me.<sup>51</sup>

Lewis objects to the irrationality of the impressionists' assumption of the pose of scientific objectivity for their uncritical portrayal of a limited area of experience, their choice of the role of the passive observer, and their rejection of the intellect, which Lewis regards as the sole instrument capable of structuring experience into a composite whole. Pound in Canto 94 similarly attacks the fallacy of accepting an allegedly "innocent" moment of sensory experience as a cognitory point of departure:

Was it Frate Egidio - "per la mente"

looking down and reproving

"Who shd/mistake the eye for the mind."<sup>52</sup>





The opposite fallacy is equally condemned: "And who try to use the mind for the senses/drive screws with a hammer."<sup>53</sup>

The distinctions made by Lewis and Pound in their early writings on vorticism between the receptive mind and the fully-conscious projective mind remain an integral part of both Lewis's and Pound's thinking. In Mauberley Pound explores the nature of the receptive artist, "delighted with the imaginary/Audition of the phantasmal sea-surge"<sup>54</sup>--his fate a union with the process in which his own identity splutters intermittently, and eventually becomes indistinguishable from the sea itself:

Thick foliage  
Placid beneath warm suns,  
Tawn foreshores  
Washed in the cobalt of oblivions;

Or through dawn-mist  
The grey and rose  
Of the juridical  
Flamingoes;

A consciousness disjunct,  
Being but this overblotted  
Series  
Of intermittences;

Coracle of Pacific voyages,  
The unforecasted beach;  
Then on an oar  
Read this:

"I was  
And I no more exist;  
Here drifted  
An hedonist."<sup>55</sup>



Pound had noted in an essay on vorticism in the New Age that "it is not surprising that the human mind in a state of lassitude or passivity should take on again the faculties of the unconscious or sub-human energies or minds of nature; that the momentarily dominant atom of personality should, that is to say, retake the pattern-making faculty which lies in the flower seed or in the grain or in the animal cell."<sup>56</sup> In the Cantos, the "Lotophagoi of the suave nails, quiet, scornful,"<sup>57</sup> like Mauberley, drift with the water:

Sea weed dried now, and now floated,  
mind drifts, weed, slow youth, drifts,  
Stretched on the rock, bleached and now floated;<sup>58</sup>

--irritable and unstable,

Is formed, is destroyed,

Recomposes, to be once more decomposed

(thus, descending to plant life).<sup>59</sup>

In contrast to the lotus-eaters are the active instigators, the "factive" personalities whose deed "hath the light of the doer; as it were /a form cleaving to it"<sup>60</sup>:

'et amava perdutamente Ixotta degli Atti'

e 'ne fu degna

'constans in proposito'

'Placuit oculis principis





'pulchra aspectu'

'populo grata (Italiaeque decus)

'and built a temple so full of pagan works!

i. e. Sigismund

and in the style 'Past ruin'd Latium'

The filagree hiding the gothic,

with a touch of rhetoric in the whole

And the old sarcophagi,

such as lie, smothered in grass, by San Vitale.<sup>61</sup>

In Lewis, the antithesis between the mind as conceiving and the mind as receiving is explored in Enemy of the Stars. On the one hand, there is the protagonist Arghol, the enemy of the stars, represented in the drawing that accompanies the play in the first issue of Blast as a metallic upright figure with a head like a miniature radio-telescope:

INVESTMENT OF RED UNIVERSE.

EACH FORCE ATTEMPTS TO SHAKE HIM.

CENTRAL AS STONE. POISED MAGNET

OF SUBTLE, VAST, SELFISH THINGS.

HE LIES LIKE HUMAN STRATA OF INFERNAL  
BIOLOGIES. WALKS LIKE WARY SHIFTING OF BODIES  
IN DISTANT EQUIPOISE. SITS LIKE A GOD BUILT BY



AN ARCHITECTURAL STREAM, FECUNDED BY  
MAD BLASTS OF SUNLIGHT.<sup>62</sup>

On the other hand, there is Hanp, less passive than Pound's loto-phagoi but more violent, whose "act" is not to merge gently with the process but to destroy the protagonist in one convulsive gesture:

Port-prowler, serf of the capital, serving its tongue and gail within the grasp and aroma of white, mat, immense sea. Abstract instinct of sullen seafarer, dry-salted in slow acrid airs, serian flood not stopped by shore, dying in dirty warmth of harbour-boulevards.

His soul like ocean-town; leant on by two sides. Lower opaque one washes it with noisy clouds: or lies giddily flush with street crevices, wedges of black air, flooding it with red emptiness of dead light.

It sends ships between its unchanging slight rock of houses periodically, slowly to spacious centre. Nineteen big ships, like nineteen normal souls for its amphibious sluggish body, locked there.<sup>63</sup>

Arghol and Hanp appear in numerous guises and modes in Lewis's work, as the "natures" and "puppets" of The Art of Being Ruled and much later as the Pullman and Satterthwaites of The Childermass, who, as the modern Don Quijote and Sancho Panza, journey relatively unscathed through a shifting, somewhat radioactive landscape.

In his later descriptions of the "will to form" as in the earlier, Pound emphasizes the active quality implicit in this concept of self-expression: "The light of the DOER, as it were a form cleav-





ing to it meant an ACTIVE pattern, a pattern that set things in motion."<sup>64</sup> This substitution of the "will to form" with its connotations of a dynamic projection and a recurring activity for the romantic concept of self-expression as the emptying out of an enclosed entity reflects a shift in focus apparent in the art of the period. From an interest in the single personality enclosed in its emotional and cultural framework facing an alien externality with its own fixed contours, attention has moved to an interest in the mind in the process of receiving and creating the external world. The cubist revolution rested on "the fact of moving around an object to seize from it several successive appearances."<sup>65</sup> The new programme of self-expression through the successive seizing of multiple points of view is described by Lewis in Blast in "Art Vortex: Be Thyself":

You must talk with two tongues, if you do not wish to cause confusion. . . .

You must give the impression of two persuaders. . . with four eyes vacillating concentrically at different angles upon the object chosen for subjugation. . . .

For, the Individual, the single object, and the isolated, is, you will admit, an absurdity.

Why try and give the impression of a consistent and indivisible personality?

---

You can establish yourself either as a Machine of two similar fraternal surfaces overlapping.

Or, more sentimentally, you may postulate the relation of object and its shadow for your two selves.



There is Yourself: and there is the Exterior World, that fat mass you browse on.

You knead it into an amorphous imitation of yourself inside yourself.

Sometimes you speak through its huskier mouth, sometimes through yours.

Do not confuse yourself with it, or weaken the esoteric lines of fine original being. . . .

Any machine then you like: but become mechanical by fundamental dual repetition. . . .

You must catch the clearness and logic in the midst of contradictions: not settle down and snooze on an acquired, easily possessed and mastered, satisfying shape.<sup>66</sup>

Pound similarly conceives of self-expression not as the expression of the "easily possessed and mastered, satisfying shape" but as rigorous process involving a series of self-projections into an external structure or complex, which can take the form of a created persona, a translation, or a chain of images correlative to an emotional state:

In the "search for oneself," the search for "sincere self-expression," one gropes, one finds some seeming verity. One says "I am" this, that, or the other, and with these words scarcely uttered one ceases to be that thing.

I began this search for the real in a book called Personae, casting off, as it were, complete masks of the self in each poem. I continued in a long series of translations, which were but more elaborate masks.

Secondly, I made poems like "The Return," which is an objective reality, and has a complicated sort of significance, like Mr. Epstein's "Sun God" or Mr. Brzeska's "Boy with a Coney." Thirdly, I have written "Heather" which represents a state of consciousness or "implies" or "implicates" it.<sup>67</sup>

Since the "single object" as well as the "Individual" is an "absurdity," and since there is "no common world into which we pro-





ject ourselves and recognize what we see there as symbols of our fullest powers,"<sup>68</sup> the self is viewed as forming and re-forming in an environment characterized by the same quality of shifting landmarks as the self. The focus shifts to what Gleizes and Metzinger isolate as "reality"--the area where there is a "coincidence of a sensation and an individual mental direction."<sup>69</sup> Lewis similarly points out that "reality is in the artist, the image only in life,"<sup>70</sup> all reality being a "merging, in one degree or another, of the external and the internal," "all reality to some extent. . . one reality, saturated with our imagination."<sup>71</sup> The aim becomes to capture successively what Pound describes as "the precise instant when a thing outward and objective transforms itself, or darts into a thing inward and subjective,"<sup>72</sup> or to trap "the solid, 'the last atom of force verging off into the first atom of matter'."<sup>73</sup> The cubists move "around an object to seize from it several successive appearances, which, fused into a single image, reconstitute it in time."<sup>74</sup> The gestures involved in the object's apprehension are imaginatively recreated to form the objective aesthetic image. Gleizes and Metzinger note that

to establish pictorial space, we must have recourse to tactile and motor sensations, indeed to all our faculties. It is our whole personality which, contracting or expanding, transforms the plane of the picture. As it reacts, this plane reflects the personality back upon the understanding of the spectator, and thus pic-



torial space is defined: a sensitive passage between two subjective spaces.<sup>75</sup>

Joyce's Stephen describes the process whereby "the inscrutable dial of the Ballast office" in Dublin can be made "capable of an epiphany":

Imagine my glimpses of that clock as the gropings of a spiritual eye which seeks to adjust its vision to an exact focus. The moment the focus is reached the object is ephiphanized.

He states that "the apprehensive faculty must be scrutinized in action."<sup>76</sup>

Lewis observes in the first issue of Blast that the machinery in the contemporary world "sweeps away the doctrines of a narrow and pedantic Realism at one stroke."<sup>77</sup> Pound, exploring in his essay on Cavalcanti some of his own metaphysical sources, notes that

there is. . . a mare's nest in 'intenzione'; in some theologians it is a matter of will, with the meaning of "intention." But from Alfarabi into Averroes, and from them into Albertus there is a first and second intentio, which are modes of perception.<sup>78</sup>

In the theories and practice of the cubists and the vorticists, the impressionist doctrine of the moment--the snapshot of reality from a single point of view--can be observed undergoing a transformation into a theory of cognition more appropriate to the age:





A fat moon rises lop-sided over the mountain

The eyes, this time my world,

But pass and look from mine

between my lids

sea, sky and pool

alternate

pool, sky, sea<sup>79</sup>



### III "The lesson of machines"

Kandinsky, writing in 1912, notes that "despite differences, or perhaps even because of them, the various arts have never been closer to each other than in this recent hour of spiritual crisis."

He finds in all the arts a preoccupation with structure and with an investigation of the elements of the medium:

In each expression is the seed of an effort toward the non-representational, abstract and internal structure. Consciously or unconsciously they are obeying Socrates' advice: "Know thyself." Consciously or unconsciously, artists are studying and investigating their material, weighing the spiritual value of those elements with which it is their privilege to work.<sup>80</sup>

The painter, who finds music "the least material of the arts today" naturally seeks "to apply the means of music to his own art." The result is "that modern desire for rhythm in painting, for mathematical, abstract construction, for repeated notes in colour, for setting colour in motion."<sup>81</sup>

This community of aim among individuals who each desire to express his own personality and emotions, Kandinsky sees as the product of the mingling of impulses within the artist's "inner necessity." Inner necessity originates from three elements:





1) Every artist, as a creator, has something in him which demands expression (this is the element of personality). 2) Every artist, as the child of his time, is impelled to express the spirit of his age (this is the element of style). . . 3) Every artist, as a servant of art, has to help the cause of art (this is the quintessence of art, which is constant in all ages and among all nationalities).<sup>82</sup>

The style of the epoch results then from the confluence of the spirit of the age which "desires to reflect itself, to express artistically its life" and the artist's desire to express himself by means of the "forms which are sympathetic to his inner self."<sup>83</sup>

Kandinsky's delineation of the particular style of his epoch applies equally to the art of the vorticists. With their emphasis on the primary elements within each medium and with what Hulme describes as their "desire for austerity and bareness, a striving towards structure and away from the messiness and confusion of nature and natural things,"<sup>84</sup> they display the same stylistic symptoms that Kandinsky notes as reflections of the time. Where they differ from Kandinsky is in seeing the spirit of the age in its most immediate guise as something more substantial than Kandinsky's ubiquitous ghostly Zeitgeist. "You would not be liable," Lewis queries, ". . .to pick a quarrel with the artists of Asshur because they used the lions at the door?"<sup>85</sup>

Lewis in the second issue of Blast remarks that "nowadays . . . Nature finds itself expressed so universally in specialized



mechanical counterparts."<sup>86</sup> In his accounts of the vorticist theory, he always places his emphasis on the vorticists' reliance on machines. In Blast he notes that

We hunt machines, they are our favourite game. We invent them and then hunt them down.<sup>87</sup>

In his retrospective account of the movement in Wyndham Lewis the Artist: From Blast to Burlington House, he points out that

"Vorticism" accepted the machine-world: that is the point to stress. It sought out machine-forms. The pictures of the Vorticists were a sort of machines.<sup>88</sup>

In the introduction to the catalogue of the Tate exhibition "Wyndham Lewis and Vorticism," Lewis recalls that they "considered the world of machinery as real to us, or more so, as nature's forms, such as trees, leaves, and so forth, and that machine-forms had an equal right to exist in our canvases."<sup>89</sup> T. E.

Hulme, in a lecture given in January, 1914, isolates this "association with machinery" as the "specific differentiating quality of the new art"<sup>90</sup> and draws attention to the appearance in art forms, along with the machines themselves, of structures with organizations resembling that of machines: "Most of Picasso's paintings, for instance, whatever they may be labelled, are at bottom studies of a special kind of machinery."<sup>91</sup> Pound in

Gaudier-Brzeska describes this interest in machinery as "one





of the age-tendencies, springing up naturally in many places." It is "just as significant a phase of this age as was the Renaissance 'enjoyment of nature for its own sake,' and not merely an illustration of dogmatic ideas."<sup>92</sup>

Hulme notes that it is "not a question of dealing with machinery in the spirit, and with the methods of existing art, but of the creation of a new art having an organization, and governed by principles which are at present exemplified unintentionally, as it were, in machinery."<sup>93</sup> Hulme and the vorticists object to the futurists' sentimental presentation of the machine. Pound states that

I am perfectly aware that you can imitate the sound of machinery verbally, you can make new words, you can write

pan-pam vlum vlum vlan-ban, etc.

There are also mimetic words like bow-wow, and mao, miaou, in Greek, Chinese, Egyptian, and other tongues, imitating the noise of animals; but these are insufficient equipment for the complete man of letters, or even for national minstrelsy. The mechanical man of futurist fiction is false pastoral, he can no more fill literature than could the bucolic man.<sup>94</sup>

Marinetti had announced in his poetical Manifesto of 1912 that "by means of intuition we plan to overcome the apparently irreducible hostility which still separates our human flesh from the metal of motors."<sup>95</sup> Lewis finds objectionable this attempt on the part of the futurists "to identify himself with matter--with the whizzing, shrieking body, the smooth rolling machine, the leaping gun."<sup>96</sup>





The futurists' impressionistic display of the machine in motion Lewis sees as an attempt to mimic the machine rather than absorb it:

They [the futurists] accept objective nature wholesale or the objective world of mechanical industry. Their paen to machinery is really a worship of a Panhard racing-car, or a workshop where guns or Teddy bears are made, and not a deliberate and reasoned enthusiasm for the possibilities that lie in this new spectacle of machinery; of the use it can be put to in art.<sup>97</sup>

Unlike the futurists, the vorticists' use of the machine is "visual" and not "functional":

. . . [the vorticist] did not identify the artist with the machine. The artist observed the machine from the outside. But he did not observe the machine impressionistically: he did not attempt to represent it in violent movement. For to represent a machine in violent movement is to arrive at a blur, or a kaleidoscope. And a blur was as abhorrent to a vorticist as a vacuum is to nature.

A machine in violent motion ceases to look like a machine. It looks, perhaps, like a rose, or like a sponge. For in violent enough displacement the hardest thing takes on the appearance of the softest. A statue cut out of basalt would become more fluid, if whirled round sufficiently swiftly. So the very spirit of the machine is lost--the hard, the cold, the mechanical and the static. And it was those attributes for which Vorticism had a particular partiality.<sup>98</sup>

Machinery, Lewis states, should be regarded as a new resource, capable of assuming functions within the work of art different from those for which it had been originally designed. The artist, who assimilates the machine as archetype, can neutralize the machine:





A machinery for making parts of a 6 in. MK. 19 gun should be regarded apart from its function. Absorbed into the aesthetic consciousness it would no longer make so much as a pop-gun: its function thenceforward would change, and through its agency emotions would be manufactured, related, it is true, to its primitive efficiency, shininess, swiftness or slowness, elegance or power, but its meaning transformed. It is of exactly the same importance, and in exactly the same category, as a wave on a screen by Korin, an Odalisque of Ingres, a beetle of a sculptor of the XVIII dynasty.<sup>99</sup>

The components of this configuration--the preoccupation with abstract forms, the striving for an austere structure, and the interest in music and the machine--Pound brings together in an article on "George Antheil" which appeared in The Criterion in 1924. He points out that

machines are musical. I doubt if they are even very pictorial or sculptural, they have form, but their distinction is not in form, it is in their movement and energy; reduced to sculptural stasis they lose raison d'etre, as if their essence.<sup>100</sup>

Music, then, as "an art acting in time space," is "the art most fit to express the fine quality of machines."<sup>101</sup> The other arts, receiving the same message that the machine embodies, turn towards precision and an analysis of their own fundamental principles:

[Machines] don't confront man like the faits accomplis of nature; these latter he has to attack ab exteriore, by his observation, he can't construct 'em; he has to examine them. Machines are already an expression of his own desire for power and precision; one man can learn from them what some other man has put into them, just as he can learn from other artistic manifestations. A painting of a machine is like a painting of a painting.





The lesson of machines is precision, valuable, to the plastic artist, and to literati.<sup>102</sup>

The artists in response to an environment in which the conceptual structure is visible on the outside are turning their media themselves inside out. "Yet," Joyce states, "is no body present here which was not there before. Only is order othered. Nought is nulled. Fuitfiat!"<sup>103</sup>

A difference in emphasis is apparent in the various interpretations of the significance of abstract painting, a difference which can be seen in the attitudes expressed by Kandinsky, on the one hand, and by Lewis on the other. Whereas Kandinsky in his early theoretical statements places his main emphasis on abstract painting as an austere non-representative, expressive mode, Lewis sees the impulse towards abstraction as primarily an experimental analysis of visual perception per se, as a reaction against the pseudoscientific obsessions of the nineteenth century, a movement "away from the atmospheric, impressionistic, molecular-pointilliste, vibratory plein-air nineteenth century aesthetic" and back to the exploration of "simple visual intelligence." Art "has come back outside into the world of our eyes once more."<sup>104</sup> Gleizes and Metzinger similarly note that "the technical simplifications which have provoked such accusations denote a legitimate anxiety to eliminate everything that does not exactly correspond to





the conditions of the plastic material, a noble vow of purity."<sup>105</sup> Lewis, writing in the second issue of Blast, describes contemporary painting as "like the laboratory of the anatomist: things stand up stark and denuded everywhere as the result of endless visionary examination."<sup>106</sup> The vorticist painter, he later characterizes as having been "peculiarly preoccupied with the pictorial architectonics at the bottom of picture-making--the logical skeleton of the sensuous pictorial idea."<sup>107</sup> In all of the art movements in 1914, Lewis states, "the structural and philosophic rudiments of life were sought out" and "a return to first principles was witnessed."<sup>108</sup> Tarr's preoccupation with an art "with no inside" is neither a personal nor a narrowly "political" idiosyncrasy.

It is within this context that Pound's description of his poetry as "pure poetry" must be considered. Just as Lewis sees abstract painting as part of an intensive analysis of vision, Pound regards the creation of abstract or pure poetry as the product of a confrontation of the basic elements of the poetic medium. His interpretation of how Kandinsky's visual arts theory relates to poetry differs from that of Kandinsky himself. In Concerning the Spiritual in Art, Kandinsky, extending his interpretation of the theory as a purely expressive mode to literature, describes the literature of the future as a kind of apotheosis of symbolist poetry, in which the repetition



of words to form a musical pattern and the presentation of words wrenched from their usual symbolic connotations will release patterns that can work directly on the soul. The soul will experience "an objectless vibration, even more complicated. . . more transcendent, than the reverberations released by the sound of a bell, a stringed instrument, or a fallen board."<sup>109</sup> Pound, on the contrary, does not interpret his aim as the creation of a purely verbal universe divorced from the external world. Eliot notes in his early essay on Pound that "for poetry to approach the condition of music. . . it is not necessary that poetry should be destitute of meaning."<sup>110</sup> According to Pound, names are the consequence of things, and any act of naming divorced from the object is an absurdity. In his Guide to Kulchur Pound isolates the search for the exact articulation, for the exact definition of terms in order that the underlying structure may be adequately exposed. He seeks an equivalent in literature and in all forms of speculative thought to the analysis of form and colour undertaken by painters and sculptors. What the age demands is "the total sincerity, the precise definition."<sup>111</sup>





Commenting in his Active Anthology on the objectivists's exploration of the "mathematical" dimension of language divorced from any normal linguistic references, Pound claims that this "mathematical dimension" must be included "without destroying the feel of actual speech."<sup>113</sup> He regards Kandinsky's "objectless vibrations" as an inevitable part of the effect of poetry, but the method of approach to the releasing of these vibrations he sees not in terms of a turning aside from any of the functions or potentialities of language but as an intensified and precise use of what he describes as the primary elements of poetry--the elements he defines as phanopoeia, melopoeia, and logopoeia:

The art of poetry is divisible into phanopoeia, melopoeia, and logopoeia. Verbal composition, that is to say, is formed of words which evoke or define visual phenomena, of words which register or suggest auditory phenomena (i. e. which register the various conventional sounds of the alphabet and produce, or suggest, a raising or lowering of the tone which can sometimes be registered more accurately by musical notation), and thirdly, of a play or "dance" among the concomitant meanings, customs, usages, and implied contexts of the words themselves.<sup>114</sup>

Through the use of the third element, logopoeia, which involves the contrapuntal playing of two or more meanings, the common associations which colour language are disclosed. It is these patterns of association and discursive thinking that normally adhere to words that Pound is trying to circumvent by emphasizing what he considers



to be the structural elements of language:

Inspector of dye-works, inspector of colours and broideries  
 see that the white, black, green be in order  
 let no false colour exist here  
 black, yellow, green be of quality.<sup>115</sup>

Cubism has been described as "the most radical attempt to stamp out ambiguity and to enforce one reading of the picture that has ever been devised."<sup>116</sup>

In stating that the aim is to create poetry that approaches the conditions of music, Pound has in mind the creation of a poetry in which there will be a minimum of gaps in the process which Eliot describes as the objective correlative, the attainment of both a total fusion of content and form, and of an exact correspondence between what the poet expresses and what the reader receives. Rebecca West in a contemporary critique of the imagists notes that "just as Taylor and Gilbreth want to introduce scientific management into industry, so the Imagistes want to discover the most puissant way of whirling the scattered stardust of words into a new star of passion."<sup>117</sup> The poem becomes a machine insofar as it is a pure rationalization of those qualities intrinsic to poetry and will therefore have an unvarying effect, but it is an existent and not simply a mechanism for playing upon





the reader's soul."<sup>118</sup> Lewis had claimed in Blast that "we want to leave Nature and Men alone."<sup>119</sup>

Both Lewis and Pound regard the search for a "musical" art in which form and subject matter are identical as a return to objective, eternal aesthetic values. Pound emphasizes that imagism is not a revolutionary school. The Imagists wish only to write in accordance with what is seen as the best tradition in literature. Lewis similarly sees in the machine-age preoccupation with abstract geometrical forms a return to the central impulse in the visual arts:

All the most splendid plastic and pictorial art is in a very strict sense geometric. Every age has been a Machine Age. At least you can say that as far as art is concerned, and as far as the machine is the application of geometric principles. . . .

The bunch of cylinders of a petrol engine has very much the same structural appeal as a totem pole or the column of a mayan divinity. Engravings of such machinery have something even of the aesthetic appeal of the latter.<sup>120</sup>

Lewis claims that in this century there has been "more art of the best kind than in all the other centuries of European art put together."<sup>121</sup> The work of Picasso, Chirico, Derain and Brancusi represents "a progress backwards. . . to the great central, and stable canons of artistic expression."<sup>122</sup> Music, then, insofar as it is an art in which precision, structure, and a fusion of form and content are emphasized, is for the vorticists both the



machine-age mode and the "typical or ideally consummate art" that Pater describes.

Pater's notion of the "typical or ideally consummate art" is a complex one, and it is not clear whether it is a description of a particular style or a description of a particular attitude. It is clear, however, that Pater is not talking about a specific style or a specific attitude, but about a general principle of art. This principle is that art should be "typical or ideally consummate," which means that it should be a perfect example of its kind, and it should be a perfect example of the human mind.

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the great machine, and the great machine

the great machine, and the great machine

the great machine, and the great machine

the great machine, and the great machine

the great machine, and the great machine

the great machine, and the great machine

the great machine, and the great machine

the great machine, and the great machine





#### IV "The stone knows the form"

Pound in his study of Gaudier-Brzeska uses the art of sculpture as the point of departure for an outline of a vorticist aesthetic which he sees as applicable to all the arts. Sculpture was the modern art which first captured his attention, as he indicates in a letter to John Quinn in March, 1916:

Years ago, three I suppose it is or four, I said to Epstein (not having seen these things of Lewis, or indeed more than a few things he had then exhibited), "the sculpture seems to be so much more interesting. I find it much more interesting than the painting."

Jacob said, "But Lewis' drawing has the qualities of or so many of the qualities of sculpture." (He may have said 'all the qualities'). At any rate, that set me off looking at Lewis.<sup>123</sup>

Like the cubists, the vorticists wished to translate the solidity of sculpture into literary and pictorial modes:

'As the sculptor sees the form in the air

before he sets hand to mallet,

'and as he sees the in, and the through,

the four sides

'not the one face to the painter.'<sup>124</sup>

Hulme had earlier observed that the "new verse resembles sculpture rather than music; it appeals to the eye rather than to the ear."<sup>125</sup> Both Lewis and Pound define their conception of positive



artistic values in terms that evoke the art of sculpture--in particular, the sculpture of their contemporaries in which was apparent, Mervyn Levy notes, "a movement away from the excesses of the nineteenth-century romantic and impressionistic modelling; a shift of sculptural emphasis from the soft indulgences of clay to the hard disciplined carving of wood and stone."<sup>126</sup>

Lewis affirms his liking for "the hard, cold, formal skull or carapace"<sup>127</sup> and "a resistant and finely-sculptured surface, or sheer words."<sup>128</sup> The key function within Pound's poetry of his interest in "the sculpture of rhyme" and the extent to which the art of sculpting informs both the content and technique of the Cantos have been pointed out in the critical studies of Hugh Kenner and Donald Davie.<sup>129</sup> While music provides the descriptive model for the aim and effect of the vorticist art, sculpture is the art in which Pound finds an important aspect of the vorticist aesthetic most clearly exposed--the relation between the artistic volition and its expressive material.

According to Pound's vorticist aesthetic, the primary form, the signature of the artist's emotions adheres to the material itself, which has its own resistance and effect on the form:





Sunt lumina

that the drama is wholly subjective

stone knowing the form which the carver imparts it

the stone knows the form<sup>130</sup>

Throughout his book on Gaudier-Brzeska, Pound emphasizes the acceptance by Epstein and Gaudier-Brzeska of the different qualities and possibilities inherent in their material. Their sculpture makes "the stone expressive in its fit and particular manner."

Since they have regard for the nature of their material, they produce sculpture which is "not something suitable for plaster or bronze, transferred to stone by machines and underlings,"<sup>131</sup> but an organization of masses and planes that is inseparable from the material itself and arises from it.

This acceptance of the material also involves an acceptance on the part of these sculptors of the necessity for organic forms to be used as the base of the sculptural form. In Gaudier-Brzeska Pound outlines the argument of an article on "The Need for Organic forms in Sculpture" that Gaudier-Brzeska had planned to write for the second issue of Blast:

His conclusion, after. . . months of thought and experiment, was that combinations of abstract or inorganic forms exclusively, were more suitable for painting than for sculpture. Firstly, because in painting one can have a much greater complexity, a much greater number of form units than in sculpture. In sculpture the main com-





position must be simpler. At least the outline from any one point of view must be simpler than the gross conglomeration of forms in a painting; in say, one of the more complex designs of Lewis' "Timon."

Secondly, The field for combinations of abstract forms is nearly unexplored in occidental painting, whereas machinery itself has used up so many of the fine combinations of three dimensional inorganic forms that there is very little use in experimenting with them in sculpture.<sup>132</sup>

"A good sculptor 'abstracts' form," Pound later states, "takes form from natural objects, and puts it together again in his work."<sup>133</sup> He remarks concerning Gaudier-Brzeska's work that "one finds him developing his abstractions, reducing the imitative drawing of an horse to the relative masses or working down to the simple design of his alabaster paperweight from a series of red 'incomprehensible' skeletons of the human figure."<sup>134</sup> Stanley Casson notes that Gaudier-Brzeska's most successful achievement was the rendering of natural organic figures from a sense of inorganic pattern added to them. He never went quite to the lengths to which Brancusi, Modigliani, Zadkine, and Archipenko have gone, whose "pure forms" are often but patterns disguised as organic figures. He had, too, a profound sense of the superior value of organic form, of the living and moving body.<sup>135</sup>

Hulme finds in a group of Epstein's drawings for sculpture that "generation, which is the very essence of all the qualities. . . called organic, has been turned into something as hard and durable as a geometrical figure itself."<sup>136</sup>





This recognition of the particularity and otherness of the material through which the artistic volition is expressed is characteristic of many of the artists who were associated with the vortical movement. While retaining the concept of the artistic volition as central to their aesthetic, they do not see the "will to form" as a missile-like impulse shaping the outer world into an image of its own expressive power. In an essay on imagism in the New Age, Pound makes a distinction between two kinds of images:

The Image can be of two sorts. It can arise within the mind. It is then "subjective." External causes play upon the mind, perhaps; if so, they are drawn into the mind, fused, transmitted, and emerge in an Image unlike themselves. Secondly, the Image can be objective. Emotion seizing up some external scene or action carries it intact to the mind; and that vortex purges it of all save the essential or dominant or dramatic qualities, and it emerges like the external original.<sup>137</sup>

He elsewhere notes that the "key word of vorticist art was Objectivity."<sup>138</sup> Self-expression for the vorticists involves the finding in the external world of the exact equation or mask for the complex of ideas and emotions that they wish to express. Lewis in the second issue of Blast observes that "the moment the Plastic is impoverished for the Idea, we get out of direct contact with those intuitive waves of power, that only play on the rich surfaces where life is crowded and abundant"<sup>139</sup> and that "the Imagination, not to be a ghost, but to have the vividness and warmth of life, and the



atmosphere of a dream, uses, where best inspired, the pigment and material of nature."<sup>140</sup> Pound and Eliot, with their care for the qualities that adhere to the word before the poet approaches it, and Joyce, with his exposure of the universe of puns that exist within the language, can be seen as exemplifying the attitudes of the sculptor Pound describes in Gaudier-Brzeska. Pound, in his search for the primary elements in language, is attempting to establish an autonomous area of language where the word will neither dissolve under the pressure of a subjective impulse nor become a rigid component in some ideological structure:

Intangible and abstruse the bright silk of the sunling,

Pours down in manifest splendour,

You can neither stroke the precise word with your hand

Nor shut it down under a box-lid.<sup>141</sup>

Similarly, Eric Newton notes that Lewis's preoccupation as a painter with the metallic never leads him to a deformation of the image. "Nothing could be more fascinating," he states, "than to watch Mr. Lewis identifying Nature (i.e. his given subject matter) with metal, taking all the really metallic objects in his stride and gently wooing and coaxing the non-metallic objects till they begin to speak with a metallic accent without losing their 'essence.'"<sup>142</sup>





The relation between the vorticist artist, his material and the organization of primary forms that is his work of art is described by Pound in an essay on vorticism in January, 1915 in terms of the image of the magnet and the rose-pattern it solicits from the iron filings. This image, used recurringly by Pound, extends the idea expressed in Gaudier-Brzeska that the sculptor's function is to release and organize the expressive potentialities latent within the stone. The "organization of forms" in the vorticist work of art expresses "a confluence of forces" emanating from the artist in the same way as the pattern of order and beauty in the iron filings announces the active presence of the magnet.<sup>143</sup>

There is reciprocity in the process. A field of force meets a material that can assume the shape of its delineation. Similarly, to produce the form structure, the work of art, there must be a co-relation between the artistic volition, the emotions and ideas the artist wishes to express, and the primary forms that arise within the material from which the work of art originates. "In Vorticism," Lewis states, "the direct and hot impressions of life are mated with Abstraction, or the combination of the Will."<sup>144</sup>

The aim is to create "MACHINES OF LIFE, a sort of LIVING plastic geometry,"<sup>145</sup> to rediscover, as Pound later describes it, "the radiant world where one thought cuts through another



with clean edge, a world of moving energies 'mezzo oscuro  
rade, ' 'risplende in se perpetuale effecto,' magnetisms that  
 take form, that are seen, or that border the visible, the matter  
 of Dante's paradiso, the glass under water, the form that seems  
 a form seen in a mirror, these realities, perceptible to the sense,  
 interaction. . . ."<sup>146</sup> In Canto 74, the mind as magnet moves  
 among the major configural elements that make up the ground  
 pattern of the Cantos:

Serenely in the crystal jet

as the bright ball that the fountain tosses

(Verlaine) as diamond clearness

How soft the wind under Taishan

where the sea is remembered

out of hell, the pit

out of the dust and glare evil

Zephyrus / Apeliota

This liquid is certainly a

property of the mind

nec accidens est but an element

in the mind's make-up

est agens and functions dust to the fountain pan  
 otherwise





Hast 'ou seen the rose in the steel dust

(or swansdown ever?)

so light is the urging, so ordered the dark petals of iron  
we who have passed over Lethe.<sup>147</sup>

"Nature" in Lewis's paintings and in the Cantos, as in much modern art, is the ordered pattern that corresponds precisely to man's ordering mind, a separate reality that is stylized to the point where it can be seen as a counterpart of the human. Neither Lewis nor Pound saw the representation of the geometric or crystalline as a denial of the organic, but as an intensified expression of a structure that coheres to the object:

Cythera potens, *Κύθηρα δεινὰ*

no cloud, but the crystal body

the tangent formed in the hand's cup

as live wind in the beech grove

as strong air amid cypress

*Κόρη Δελιά δεινὴ*/et libidinis expers

the sphere moving crystal, fluid<sup>148</sup>

In Gaudier-Brzeska's "The Dancer" Pound sees "the sphere moving crystal":



We have the triangle and circle asserted, labeled almost, upon the face and right breast. Into these so-called abstractions life flows, the circle moves and elongates into the oval, it increases and takes volume in the sphere of hemisphere of the breast. The triangle moves towards organism it becomes a spherical triangle (the central life-form common to both Brzeska and Lewis). These two developed motifs work as themes in a fugue. We have the whole series of spherical triangles, as in the arm over the head, all combining and culminating in the great sweep of the back of the shoulders, as fine as any surface in all sculpture. The "abstract" or mathematical bareness of the triangle and circle are fully incarnate, made flesh, full of vitality and of energy.<sup>149</sup>

Implicit in this concept of a marriage of the geometric and the organic in which "the stone knows the form" is the assumption of an interlocking universe:

Le Paradis n'est pas artificiel

ΚΥΘΗΡΑ ΚΥΘΗΡΑ

moving *ἐντὸς* *χθονός* / enters the hall of the records

the forms of men rose out of

Le Paradis n'est pas artificiel<sup>150</sup>

Pound sees man as a component in a world that is a web of relations and of identical processes:

the rain beat as with the colour of feldspar

blue as the flying fish off Zoagli

pax, *ἡδύς*

*ἡδύς*

the sage

delighteth in water

the humane man has amity with the hills<sup>151</sup>





As in Confucian thought, the assumption of a correspondence between the cognitive and perceptive faculties of man and the world he inhabits and a consequent interplay between the human constructs and the world of nature provides the basis for the Cantos:

The plan is in nature

rooted

Coming from earth, times (ch'ang) respected

Their powers converging

(chu four assemble

There is a must at the root of it

Not one man's mere power<sup>152</sup>

This complex of interrelations is held together in the "ἄσπερος, the ineffable crystal,"<sup>153</sup> which<sup>is</sup> for Pound both the neo-platonic One, which he describes as "mind, apart from any man's individual mind, the sea crystalline and enduring. . . the bright as it were molten glass which envelops us, full of light"<sup>154</sup> and the Confucian "concrete and indivisible whole."<sup>155</sup> There is, initially at least, no concept of dualism in Pound's world. Darkness is an opacity, an obscuring of the light, and, as in the Confucian tradition, has no existential qualities: "The celestial and earthly process can be defined in a single phrase; its actions and its



creations have no duality [The arrow has not two points]."<sup>156</sup>

Although everything is related to every other thing in Pound's interlocked world of dynamic movement, each individual component has its distinct quality, as Pound makes clear in an early definition of *virtu*, the medieval term he uses as his descriptive term of identity: "the soul of each man is compounded of all the elements of the cosmos of souls, but in each soul there is some one element which predominates, which is in some peculiar and intense way the quality or *virtu* of the individual; in no two souls is this the same."<sup>157</sup> He finds an analogous pattern in Confucian thought where a precise demarcation is made between the individual part and the harmonious whole, and in Leibniz's concept of the monad. Leibniz's "unsquashable monad," he states in Guide to Kulchur, "may now have been pulverized into sub-electrons, it may have been magnified in the microscope's eye to the elaborate structure of a solar system, but <sup>it</sup> holds as a concept."<sup>158</sup>

The human consciousness joins with the nous intermittently in isolated moments of awareness. The records left from these moments, the "sea wave/undying luminous and translucent"<sup>159</sup> form the complex of permanent human values





the deathless,  
 Forms, forms and renewals, gods held in the air,  
 Forms seen, and then clearness  
 Bright void, without image, Napishtim,  
 Casting his gods back into the ~~form~~ 160

This complex of forms Pound calls "sagatrieb," the tradition  
 that includes works of art, conceptual structures, folk traditions,  
 and the isolated aperçues that emerge in conversation:

"Slowness is beauty":

from the

三

San

孤

Ku

to Poitiers

the tower wherein, at one point, is now shadow,  
 and Jacques de Molay, is where?  
 and the "Section," the proportions,  
 lending, perhaps, not at interest, but resisting,  
 Then false fronts, barrocco.  
 "We have," said Mencius, "but phenomena."  
 monumenta. In nature are signatures  
 needing no verbal tradition,



oak leaf never plane leaf. John Heydon.

sleep there on the ground

And old Jarge held there was a tradition,

that was not mere epistemology.

Mohamedons will remain, -- naturally --unconverted

If you remove houris from Paradise

as to hsin



In short, the cosmos continues

and there is an observation in Morrison

leading to Remy?<sup>161</sup>

Pound sees in this emergence of the permanent human values a process that is identical to the process by which forms emerge in the natural world--a concept that is emblematically developed in the Cantos in the imagery of stone and water. In Canto 17, the evolution of water into marble is used as an icon for the process by which the work of art, "the forma, the concept rises from death."<sup>162</sup> Donald Davie notes that in this canto

Pound compresses into a single perception the whole process of the composition of marble from the incrustation of sunken timber by algae, through shell-encrusted cliff and cave, to the hewn stone of the palazzo with its feet in water. Thus "Marble trunks out of stillness" are barks of timber encrusted by limestone deposits, but they are no less ('on past the palazzi") the hewn columns of some Venetian portico, which is "the rock sea-worn" as well as the wood stone-encrusted.<sup>163</sup>





This imposition of the descriptive account of the evolution of marble on to the images of the palazzi of Venice, portrayed as if in the process of rising from water, and on to the scenes from Venetian painting that recur in this canto, underlines the concept of an identity of process that the poet wishes to convey. Just as the stone is a forma of the interaction of the sea and earth, the sculpted stone or city--in this canto the sea-borne Venice--is a forma of the marriage of human creativity and stone in which the natural processes involved in their formation is both celebrated and recreated in form and motif. The natural process is resolved in the crystallized form of art. The function of the architect, then, is to "make it new" by exposing and embodying the creative forces in the universe.

These metaphysical views Pound shares with many of the modern painters who have examined the basic assumptions of their art. The concept of an objective correspondence between gesture and mood is implicit in Kandinsky's theory of a musical art and in the practice of contemporary painters. The preoccupation with motion has often led theorists towards the futurist view of the world of motion as a unified field of force, "an infinite series of successive evolutions of a single variant."<sup>164</sup> Alexander Calder, the inventor of the mobile, has noted that "any



element that possesses motion, whether within itself or in space, that can oscillate, come and go, stands in a dynamic relationship to all the other elements composing its world"<sup>165</sup>--a principle that has found an application both in Joyce's Finnegans Wake and in the Cantos. Klee's famous simile of the artist as the trunk of a tree through which the natural forces are transmitted and transformed expresses a view similar to that of Pound. The search for primary elements that has characterized all modern art has led to a perception of unity in which the universe is resolved into a series of repeating forms, Brancusi's sculptural reduction of experience to a series of ovoids being in some respects an archetype for the process. Ancient modes appear to have been on occasion re-invented rather than consciously copied. Kandinsky's last works are "made up of hieroglyphs which resurrect the scripts of Egypt and Asia Minor."<sup>166</sup> A neo-pythagorean element, latent in the concept of abstract art, is fully developed in Le Corbusier's theory of the modular in which, in a marriage of mathematics and the human body, harmonious "rites" are reestablished.

Lewis objects to these portrayals of a world of dynamic movement in which all parts are interrelated--"this gramophone of a circular cosmic spot."<sup>167</sup> Lewis notes that "the West has





delivered its contribution, has come the full circle, from Pythagoras and his numerical universe to the likewise numerical atomic basis of the material world as adumbrated by contemporary physicists, so that the distinction of one substance from another turns out to be a matter of numerical patterns."<sup>168</sup> Hulme had earlier observed that "one of the main achievements of the nineteenth century was the elaboration and universal application of the principle of continuity" and saw "the destruction of this conception" as "an urgent necessity of the period."<sup>169</sup> Like Hulme, Lewis believes in discontinuity, in the existence of absolute gaps. Hulme distinguishes three separate areas, the world of physics or inorganic substances, the organic world, and a region of absolute ethical and religious values; Lewis, the human mind as the "enemy of life," from the world of nature, the world of machines that once set in motion proceed automatically. In The Art of Being Ruled, Lewis isolates the super-imposition of biological metaphors on the patterns of the industrial world as one of the central paradoxes of the time: "the further men get away from nature and their former agricultural pursuits. . . the more they employ the imagery of nature, of the growth of pigs and trees, to define the irrational, fatal evolution of human societies."<sup>170</sup>



Lewis also objects to the limiting of the area of creative endeavour that is implicit in these theories of a dynamic continuum, since the proposition that if all things move, then everything must be related, can only logically be fulfilled within the confines of an enclosed world. Lewis in his critique of Pound in the One Way Song and elsewhere describes Pound's forms not as the transmitting stations of a new paideuma, but as static reflections of history, a portrait gallery from the past presented in an accelerated fashion. Lewis characterizes himself as "a 'bitter' critic of all those symptoms of the interregnum that suggest a compromise or backsliding or a substitution of opportunist romantic policies (prepared to follow every sinuosity of the landscape, rather than build spectacular escapes) for a policy of creative compulsion."<sup>171</sup>

In his autobiography Rude Assignment he points out that

no political planner could be more fanatical a planner than I, but the disciplines involved were formal and cultural. The biggest visual fact, the City, was my starting point. The haphazard manner in which everything struggles and drifts into existence filled me with impatience. I would have had a city born by fiat, as if out of the brain of a god, or someone with a god-like power, in my parable of the Caliph's design issuing from the decree of a despot.<sup>172</sup>

But the only city that gets built in Lewis's work is quite literally a demonic one. Joyce, referring in Finnegans Wake to Lewis's vorticist drawings, "The Planners" and "The Plan of War,"





comments that "the champaign he draws for us is as flop as a plankreig."<sup>173</sup> Pound repeatedly notes in Thrones that

The snow's lace washed here as sea-foam

不

But the lot of 'em, Yeats, Possum, Old Wyndham

had no ground to stand on

Black shawls still worn for Demeter

in Venice,

in my time<sup>174</sup>

Pound traditionally ascends into the air to define the shape of the paradisal city.



## V "A Form Cut Into Time"

Lewis began to question the uncritical acceptance of music as the machine-age mode in the second issue of Blast where he notes that "Kandinsky's spiritual values and musical analogies seem to be undesirable, even if feasible."<sup>175</sup> In The Demon of Progress in the Arts, he describes how

after the war I recognized that, prior to the war, I had been visited by a complaint of a most unusual kind. I saw that it was irrational to attempt to transmute the art of painting into music--to substitute for the most naturally concrete of the arts the most inevitably abstract. . . what I was headed for, obviously, was to fly away from the world of men, of pigs, of chickens and alligators, and to go to live in the unwatered moon, only a moon sawed up in square blocks, in the most alarming way.<sup>176</sup>

By the time he published Time and Western Man in 1926, he saw the interest in music as part of a total cultural complex which registered a shift from the dominance of the eye and space to the dominance of the ear and time:

Dispersal and transformation of a space-phenomenon into a time-phenomenon throughout everything--that is the trick of this doctrine. Pattern, with its temporal multiplicity, and its chronologic depth, is to be substituted for the thing, with its one time, and its spatial depth.<sup>177</sup>

Time and Western Man is a vast compendium of examples taken from contemporary thought and practice which reflected this shift. Pound and Joyce, among many others, are castigated as





"time-men." Under the rule of time, the "musical" philosophies were presiding over the dissolution and inter-penetration in the flux of the contours of the self and the object:

A crowd of hurrying shapes, a temporal collectivity, is to be put in the place of the single object of what it hostilely indicates as the "spatializing" mind. The new dimension introduced is the variable mental dimension of time. So the notion of the transformed "object" offered us by this doctrine is plainly in the nature of a "futurist" picture--like a running dog with a hundred legs and a dozen backs and heads. In place of the characteristic static "form". . . you have a "formation"--as it is characteristically called--a repetition of a particular shape; you have a battalion of forms in place of one form. In your turn. . . "you" are no longer a centralized self, but a spun-out, strung along series, a pattern-of-a-self, depending like the musical composition upon time; an object, too, always in the making, who are your states. So you are a history: there must be no Present for you. You are an historical object, since your mental or time-life has been as it were objectified.<sup>178</sup>

The idea of a culture with a form-in-movement but no content is embedded in a metaphorical pattern that recurs in Lewis's work:

The insect and plant worlds, much more than the animal world, have always carried their structure outside, as it were, and thrust it upon the eye. The insect world could be truly said to be a machine world, much more than our age, as yet, is a Machine Age.<sup>179</sup>

Lewis saw the superimposition of musical rhythms on natural rhythms as a substitution of death for life, and "musical" politics as "the politics of hypnotism, enregimentation, the sleep of the dance."<sup>180</sup>



In contrast to the lack of definition and the hypnotic tendency he associates with music, Lewis avers that "to solidify, to make concrete, to give definition to--that is my profession. . .to crystallize that which (otherwise) flows away, to concentrate the diffuse, to turn to ice that which is liquid and mercurial--that certainly describes my occupation, and the tendency of all that I think."<sup>181</sup>

In Men without Art, he states his credo: "I am for the Great Without, for the method of the external approach--for the wisdom of the eye, rather than that of the ear."<sup>182</sup>

Pound was not unaware of those qualities of music which Lewis did not like to see translated into non-musical areas:

Pull down thy vanity, I say pull down  
Learn of the green world what can be thy place  
In scaled invention or true artistry,  
Pull down thy vanity,  
Paquin pull down!

The green casque has outdone your elegance<sup>183</sup>

Pound had early defined melopoeia as "a force tending often to lull, or to distract the reader from the exact sense of the language." "It is," he states, "a poetry on the borders of music and music is perhaps the bridge between consciousness and the unthinking sentient or even insentient universe."<sup>184</sup> Pound retains his interest in an art which "approaches the conditions of music,"





but takes care to distinguish between what he sees as two kinds of music:

There are two aesthetic ideals, one the Wagnerian, which is not dissimilar from that of the Foire de Neuilly, i. e. you confuse the spectator by smacking as many of his senses as possible at every moment. This prevents his noting anything with unusual lucidity, but you may fluster or excite him to the point of making him receptive, i. e. you may slip over an emotion, or you may sell him a rubber doll or a new cake of glass-mender during the hurly burly.

The other aesthetic has been approved by Brancusi, Lewis, the vorticist manifestoes; it aims at focussing the mind on a given definition of form, or rhythm, so intensely that it becomes not only more aware of that given form, but more sensitive to all other forms, rhythms, defined planes, or masses.

It is a scaling of eye-balls, a castigating or purging of aural cortices; a sharpening of verbal apperceptions. It is by no means an emollient.<sup>185</sup>

In this "vorticist" music, the focussing on the resonance and definition of the single sound serves as a point of departure for the creation of a moving form in which the individual sound can retain its shape:

And the waves like a forest

Where the wind is weightless in the leaves

But moving,

so that sound runs upon sound<sup>186</sup>

The aim is a kind of art that will incorporate the solidity of sculpture without sacrificing the dynamic element of process, music that will be "a form cut into time,"<sup>187</sup> "a projectile carrying a wire and cutting, defining the three dimensions of space."<sup>188</sup>



It is as "silhouettes in succession" rather than forms cut into time that Pound sees the traditional structural models: "Our science is from the watching shadows."<sup>189</sup> Just as painters were rejecting three dimensional perspective--"that infallible device for making all things shrink,"<sup>190</sup> as Guillaume Apollinaire describes it--Pound found the traditional narrative pattern inappropriate for the portrayal of the city, where "the visual impressions succeed each other, overlap, overcross. . . ." These impressions are often "a flood of nouns without verbal relations."<sup>191</sup> Also rejected is the harmonic pattern of music since Bach, where the sound is either muddled or distorted because of a concentration on the simultaneous striking of notes in vertical layers, and the melodic impulse is reduced to a mechanical shunting of combinations of chords. In "monolinear logic,"<sup>192</sup> that "defining by receding,"<sup>193</sup> the fact disappears in a "region of remoter and progressively remoter abstraction,"<sup>194</sup> and the result is the same mechanization of movement in which the integrity of the part is destroyed as is apparent in the European development of melody. The traditional post-Renaissance metrical patterns similarly tend to create a mechanical clatter in which the various weighting of syllables in the poetic phrase and the quality of individual vowels that the ear can discriminate are not accurately registered. The





iambic metre in particular, "magnetizes certain verbal sequences"<sup>195</sup> and disturbs the effect of "chiselling" which he wishes to attain.

Pound sees the ideogrammic method in which "sound runs upon sound" as an alternative to the traditional methods of structuring. In his retrospective essay on art movements, "D'Artagnan and After," he presents as an example of this method, the three-part statement in the Japanese hokku in which there is progression with no sacrifice of the identity of the part nor dependence on a distorting chiaroscuro:

Most hokkus are bilateral:

The foot-steps of the cat upon

The snow:

Plum blossoms

may seem to the careless peruser to be only bilateral, two visual images: but they are so placed as to contain wide space and a stretch of colour between them. The third element is there, its dimension from the fruit to the shadow in the foot-prints. No moral but a mood caught in its pincers.<sup>196</sup>

According to this method, the clearly-defined conceptual units resound against each other and define their own relations--as in modern painting where the forms and colours articulate their own space in accordance with the rhythms of their mutual interplay. As Fenollosa had noted, the "two things added together do not produce a third thing but suggest some fundamental relation between them."<sup>197</sup>



In Pound's conception of horizontal music, this method defined in musical terms, the point of departure is similarly the "single" sounds produced by multiple impact"<sup>198</sup> and the melodic progression takes place not with reference to a controlling centre but in terms of the relations set up between individual notes. According to this method, any note can follow any other, but attention must be paid to the "strict and even interesting time-interval between their emission,"<sup>199</sup> to the sequence of notes at determined pitches. The musician must consider "the question of where one wave-node meets another, or where it banks against the course of another wave to strengthen or weaken its action."<sup>200</sup>

The effect is of a weightless structure suspended among the play of forces its own dynamic interrelations create--the same kind of effect that is to be found in much contemporary painting, sculpture and architecture. In Pound's system it is the spectator's perceptual mechanisms that expose the ground plan of the structure, registering the composition of frequencies that the work of art evokes. Pound notes that in this horizontal music, if the arrangement of notes, "their tala, their tone sequence, is of any interest, it will lock their time intervals, i. e. their individual durations and the rests between them."<sup>201</sup> Reinforcing these





tonal frequencies is the "Great Bass," "the percussion of the rhythm," which "entering the harmony exactly as another note would" acts as "a still deeper bassus; giving the main form to the sound"<sup>202</sup>--a rhythmic base that to be effective must remain in the hearer's ear. Similarly, in the Cantos where the ideogrammic method is applied, it is the reader who is required to supply the network that "locates" the poem. The poem is arranged in terms of a kind of intensity factor in which the partial exposure of areas of material, the careful preparation of events as if energy is being stored up for later release, the accumulation of detail, the persistence or lack of persistence displayed by an image or event, are the main frequency patterns. The precise way in which an item is presented as well as the item must remain in the reader's memory. The aim is a "'mechanism' working in time-space, in which all the joints are close-knit, the tones fit each other at set distances."<sup>203</sup> In the "new quasi-sculptural solidity,"<sup>204</sup> Pound sees a musical world of "steel bars" analogous to "Lewis's 'Timon,' to the ice-blocks' of Picasso."<sup>205</sup>

Critics have seen a structural base in which dynamic rhythms are held in taut equilibrium in both Gaudier-Brzeska's sculpture and Lewis's paintings--a base that does serve to lock the structure tightly in place. Stanley Casson draws attention to the fact that



Gaudier's definition of sculptural feeling as "the appreciation of masses in relation" involves a quest "for a proper balance and proportion in the figure and in the system of planes underlying it," and that his aim of defining "these masses by planes" is "another way of saying that a figure must be made to fit into a rectangular or angular system." He finds this tightly controlled structure in Gaudier-Brzeska's "The Dancer":

The body is in a vertical rectangle and the arms and legs extend from it in two triangular arrangements. There is no torsion and no confusion of curves: the statue is archaic in its simplicity.<sup>206</sup>

Professor Handley-Read in his examination of Lewis's work as a painter and draughtsman points out that "in every composition there is a rectangularity of design, a tension between rigid vertical and horizontal lines such that each picture seems to be built on a grid or network like a steel frame."<sup>207</sup> John Rothenstein has similarly characterized Lewis's early drawings as displaying an "extraordinarily tense equilibrium between powerful thrusts--between the force of gravity and that of muscular effort, between horizontals and verticals gradually relaxed."<sup>208</sup> Gaudier-Brzeska had drawn attention in his review of the Allied Artists Association Exhibition to Lewis's use of the line as a bounding surface which both invites and impedes motion when he had described Lewis's paintings as "designs of wilful limited shapes contained in a whole in motion."<sup>209</sup>





There is a further geometrical dimension in Pound's model structure. In his preface to his translation of Cavalcanti, he notes that "any given rhythm implies about it a complete musical form."<sup>210</sup> This concept of a form of a whole which is at the time perceptible in any of its individual parts suggests both a kind of space-time fusion in which every point in the sequence is impregnated with the whole, and, since a rhythm is a "form cut into time," the three-dimensional repeating structure of the crystalline form: "No, cloud, but the crystal body/the tangent formed in the hand's cup."<sup>211</sup> Similarly, the ideogrammic method, which Pound maintains can be used for the study of any phenomena,<sup>212</sup> has as its point of departure, not the postulation of an analogical relation between things, but the assumption of an identity of structure within the processes being studied. Therefore, the exact point of entry for the study of a phenomena is irrelevant. All approaches are potentially rewarding. In the ABC of Reading, Pound points out that

it doesn't, in our contemporary world, so much matter, where you begin the examination of a subject so long as you keep on until you get around again to your starting point. As it were, you start on a sphere or cube; you must keep on until you have seen it from all sides.<sup>213</sup>

Joyce discloses in a letter to Miss Harriet Weaver the geometrical structure of Finnegans Wake:



I am making an engine with only one wheel. No spokes of course. The wheel is a perfect square. You see what I am driving at, don't you? I am awfully solemn about it, mind you, so you must not think it is a silly story about the mookse and the grapes. No, it's a wheel, I tell the world. And it's all square.<sup>214</sup>

Viewed in the context of Lewis's critique of music in Time and Western Man, Pound's musical preoccupations can be seen as a single-minded attempt to "save the phenomena." Both Lewis and Pound were opposed to any retrogressive mechanical handling of material as uniform bricks to be arranged, or to the dissolving of the object in its environment that was part of the futurist programme. Both of these processes were contrary to the imaginative transformation of reality that they both sought to achieve. Lewis had observed in Blast that "A MACHINE IS IN A GREATER OR LESS DEGREE, a living thing," that "its lines and forces imply force and action whereas those of a dwelling do not."<sup>215</sup> In Time and Western Man, Lewis's critique is not so much directed against music per se as against the representation in the "musical philosophies" of the form in motion as a series of replaceable parts. A mechanical model has been superimposed on the active forces within the environment.

Lewis makes clear his own bias in Time and Western Man. He is arguing from the point of view of a visual artist and from within the European tradition. Viewed "in perspective" as the longshoreman views Pullman at the beginning of The Childermass, Pullman





may look like a "man-sparrow, who multiplies precise movements, an organism which in place of speech has evolved a peripatetic system of response to a dead environment,"<sup>216</sup> but it is a case of one mirror looking at another, for Pullman himself is a man of perspective. Insofar as Lewis held this stance, he resembles Joyce's "Tumult, son of Thunder, selfexiled in upon his ego, a nightlong a shaking betwixtween white or reddr hawrors, noondayterrorised to skin and bone by an ineluctable phamtom (may the Shaper have mercery on him!) writing the mystery of himsel in furniture."<sup>217</sup> The response of Pound, Joyce, and Lewis as a painter was "to say it with missiles then and thus arabesque the page."<sup>218</sup> Otherwise, as in the fable of the Mookse and the Gripes in Finnegans Wake, Joyce's reply to Time and Western Man, "Nurvoletta in her lightdress" will have no effect: "and she tried all she tried to make the Mookse look up at her (but He was fore too adiaptotously farseeing) and to make the Gripes hear how coy she could be (though he was much too schystimatically auricular about his ens to heed her) but it was all mild's vapour mist."<sup>219</sup>



## VI The Vortex as Model

The first reference to the vortex in Pound's work is in the poem "Plotinus" in his earliest collection of poetry A Lume Spento, published in Venice in 1908:

As one that would draw through the node of things,  
Back-sweeping to the vortex of the cone,  
Cloistered about with memories, alone  
In chaos, while the waiting silence sings.

Obliviate of cycles' wanderings

I was an atom on creation's throne  
And knew all nothing my unconquered own,  
God! Should I be the hand upon the strings?!

But I was lonely as a lonely child  
I cried amid the void and heard no cry,  
And then for utter loneliness, made I  
New thoughts as crescent images of me  
And with them was my essence reconciled  
While fear went forth from mine eternity.<sup>220</sup>





The complex of ideas that was to be associated with the vortex is visible here: the idea of a central structure in the "cycles' wanderings," the existence of a node within the chaos, an area at which the subsidiary parts center; the shape of this node as a "vortex of the cone"; the location of the artist in the centre; the work of art as a projection, the "crescent images of me" that form the centrifugal pattern.

A persistent pattern is visible in the imagery used by the vorticists in their description of their aesthetic ideas. "VORTEX IS ENERGY!",<sup>221</sup> Gaudier-Brzeska proclaims. Vorticism Pound describes repeatedly as an "intensive" art, which incarnates the "point of maximum intensity." Its patterns are the result of the "confluence of forces" emanating from the artist. The vortex itself is the "radiant node or cluster. . . from which, and through which and into which, ideas are constantly rushing."<sup>222</sup> Lewis speaks of vorticist art as "electric with a. . . mastered vitality"<sup>223</sup> and analyzes a school of painting in terms of the "content and character of its force-arrangements."<sup>224</sup> His protagonist in Enemy of the Stars is a "POISED MAGNET OF SUBTLE, VAST SELFISH THINGS."<sup>225</sup> His setting is "full of dry, white volcanic light," an "immense bleak electric advertisement of God" which "crushed with wild emptiness of street."<sup>226</sup>



Pound's use of this kind of imagery is pervasive, particularly in the years preceding the first world war. Beauty he associates with energy in the introduction to his translation of Cavalcanti's poems in 1912:

In painting, the colour is always finite. It may match the colour of the infinite spheres, but it is in a way confined within the frame and its appearance is modified by the colours around it. The line is unbounded, it marks the passage of a force, it continues beyond the frame.

Rodin's belief that energy is beauty holds thus far, namely, that all our ideas of beauty of line are in some way connected with our ideas of swiftness or easy power of motion, and we consider ugly those lines which connote unwieldy slowness in moving.<sup>227</sup>

He writes in an essay in the New Freewoman in 1913 that "we might come to believe that the thing that matters in art is a sort of energy, something more or less like electricity or radio-activity," a force "rather like water when it spurts up through very bright sand and sets it in swift motion"<sup>228</sup>--an image that recurs in Canto 4:

The water whirls up the bright sand in the spring's mouth

'Behold the Tree of the Visages!'

Forked branch-tips, flaming as if with lotus

Ply over ply

The shallow eddying fluid,

beneath the knees of the gods.<sup>229</sup>





The energy-pattern, the work of art, is "like the rose-pattern driven into the dead iron-filings by the magnet, not by material contact with the magnet itself, but separate from the magnet."<sup>230</sup> He had earlier described his interest in the "luminous" facts that "give one a sudden insight into circumjacent conditions, into their causes, their effects, into sequence and law," the facts that "govern knowledge as the switchboard governs an electric circuit."<sup>231</sup> Later he characterized the artist as the "antennae of the race"<sup>232</sup> and "great literature" as "simply language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree."<sup>233</sup> Speaking of the music he was hearing in Paris in the 1920's, he observes that "via Stravinsky and Antheil and possibly one other composer, we are brought to a closer conception of time, to a faster beat, to a closer realization or, shall we say, 'decomposition of the musical atom.'" He concludes that "the mind, even the musician's mind, is conditioned by contemporary things; our minimum in a time when the old atom is 'bombarded' by electricity, when chemical atoms and elements are more strictly considered, is no longer the minimum of the sixteenth-century pre-chemists."<sup>234</sup> Antheil's music he describes as "mechanisms" in which there are distinct innovations of musical action. An electric power-station has recurrences differing from those of a minuet.<sup>235</sup>



In "Plotinus" concepts derived from physics and from a neo-platonic philosopher whose ideas formed an important component in medieval philosophy are used as a means of zoning a complex of emotions and ideas experienced by a modern poet. The particular configuration seen in "Plotinus" occurs elsewhere in Pound's writing. The medieval concept of virtu in which the personality is given both shape and potentiality through a central core of energy, Pound has adopted as his own concept of personality. Defining the nature of virtu in his 1912 introduction to his translation of Cavalcanti, Pound states that *la virtu* is the potency, the effluent property of a substance or person. Thus modern science shows us radium with a noble virtue of energy. Everything or person was held to send forth magnetisms of certain effect. . . .

It is a spiritual chemistry, and modern science and modern mysticism are both set to confirm it.<sup>236</sup>

Pound later describes the distinctive quality of Cavalcanti's world as a "harmony of the sentient, where the thought has its demarcation, the substance its virtu, where stupid men have not reduced all 'energy' to unbounded undistinguished abstraction."<sup>237</sup> He sees this medieval world, and the world of modern physics as potential correlatives:

For the modern scientist energy has no borders, it is a shapeless "mass" of force; even his capacity to differentiate it to a degree never dreamed of by the ancients has not led him to think of its shape or even its loci. The rose that the magnet





makes in the iron filings, does not lead him to think of the force in botanic terms, or wish to visualize that force as floral and extant.

A medieval "natural philosopher" would find this modern world full of enchantments, not only the light in the electric bulb, but the thought of the current hidden in air and wire would give him a mind full of forms, "Fuor di color or having their hyper-colours. The medieval philosopher would probably have been unable to think of the electric world, and not think of it as a world of forms. Perhaps algebra has queered our geometry.<sup>238</sup>

In his Guide to Kulchur, Pound points out that "in our time the wireless telegraph has produced a new outbreak of antient speculations."<sup>239</sup>

The neo-platonic concept derived from Plato's Timaeus, of the One as a source of light, from which source creative impulses disseminate to suffuse the whole universe, provides Pound with a metaphysical base in the Cantos. The primal matter that this light energizes is in the Cantos, water: "there is no base seen under Taishan/but the brightness of udor."<sup>240</sup> Pound finds an appropriate cosmology in Grosseteste's On Light where the process by which a point of light simultaneously becomes a sphere of light is seen in a magnified form as the generative process of the universe. From the source of energy, the creative light, particles of light diffuse in the spherical pattern, carrying matter with them. In Pound's extension of Grosseteste's theory, this is a reciprocal process in which matter itself also



plays an active part: "From the long boats they have set lights in the water, /The sea's claw gathers them outward."<sup>241</sup> In this process of self-multiplication, light as both the principle of extension and of activity enters matter and introduces dimension in every direction, bringing into play the forma of matter--"the crystalline, as inverse of water, /clear over rock-bed":

Thus the light rains, thus pours, e lo soleils plovil

The liquid and rushing crystal

beneath the knees of the gods.

Ply over ply, thin glitter of water;

Brook film bearing white petals.<sup>242</sup>

Unless opaque objects impede it, this light-energy proceeds to the edge of the sphere where, as it decreases, matter is left without any potency for further extension. Located at this edge, in Pound's cosmos, is a crystalline wall which defines the periphery of the light's projective energy and preserves it within the system:

and I saw then, as if of waves taking form,

As the sea, hard, a glitter of crystal,

And the waves rising but formed, holding their form

No light reaching through them.<sup>243</sup>





Pound in Guide to Kulchur notes that "Grosseteste on Light may or may not be scientific" but "he throws onto our spectrum a beauty comparable to a work by Max Ernst." <sup>245</sup>

The configuration seen in Grosseteste's theory, in which impulses of energy disseminate from a central core of energy, Pound finds repeated in Confucian thought. Here the emphasis is on the microcosm, the individual as both the receiver and transmitter of the "tensile light," who holds these forces in a state of tense equilibrium within "the unwobbling pivot":

Happiness, rage, grief, delight. To be unmoved by these emotions is to stand in the axis, in the center; being moved by these passions each in due degree constitutes being in harmony. That axis in the center is the great root of the universe; that harmony is the universe's outspread process of existence. <sup>246</sup>

In order to be able to stand in the axis, he must "center himself" in the invariable, the "one principle," which begins at one point and spreads outward to embrace all knowledge:

Spread it out and its arrows reach to the six ends of the universe, zenith and nadir; fold it again and it withdraws to serve you in secret as faithful minister. Its savour is inexhaustible. It is, all of it, solid wisdom. The fortunate and attentive reader directing his mind to the solid, delighting in it as in a gem always carried, penetrating to its mysterious purity, when he has come to the meridian, to the precise understanding, can use it until the end of his life, never exhausting it, never able to wear it out. <sup>247</sup>





The individual is the centre of irradiating impulses that can reach outwards in transforming waves: "One village in order, / one valley will reach the four seas."<sup>248</sup> Social transformation, therefore, must start from the perception of the given conditions within the immediate environment, and proceed outwards from there.

This figure in which a central point acts as both a holding centre and the source of impulses that operate dynamically within the range of their energy is one that is implicit in the statements of many of Pound's contemporaries. Amedée Ozenfant in The Foundations of Modern Art describes the world of Poincaré and Einstein in these terms:

Our universe becomes a hypothetical one, based on astonishing laws, with geometries of more than three dimensions, which go so far as to assume that, owing to the curvature of space, the rays issuing from the sun curve at the extreme limits of space and return to their point of departure.

Infinite because everything in the universe must be curved as a result of gravitational fields; but a "bounded infinite," the presentation of which is no longer a straight line projected to infinity, but a curve for ever recommencing.<sup>249</sup>

Stanley Hayter describes Kandinsky's forms in motion as oscillations within a field in which there is a central holding point:

From 1920 on, motion between elements is clearly implied; the composition is suspended like a Calder mobile from a fixed point. Within the system itself movement takes place generally in a closed path. Like the mobile, even if the permutations of the different velocities and amplitudes of the motion result in





an almost infinite series of different positions, so that return to the initial position may be indefinitely delayed, yet due to the fixed point of suspension, the individual elements move as a balance, a pendulum, an oscillation in a circular or elliptical closed path.<sup>250</sup>

Henry James in the introduction to The Wings of the Dove speaks of his heroine as the centre of a vortex, and his artistic problem in terms of the establishing of a progression from the circumference to the centre by "narrowing circumvallations," a successive procedure in which the effect is one of carving:

There was the "fun," to begin with, of establishing, one's successive centres--of fixing them so exactly that the portions of the subject commanded by them. . . would constitute, so to speak, sufficiently solid blocks of wrought material, squared to the sharp edge, as to have weight and mass and carrying power.<sup>251</sup>

Towards the 1920's the figure of the vortex appears to have become established as a cliché--often appearing in what might be described as its "demonic" form. Yeats finds that "the center cannot hold." The people in Eliot's *Gerontion* are

whirled

Beyond the circuit of the Shuddering Bear

In fractured atoms.<sup>252</sup>

D. H. Lawrence sees London in the winter of 1915-16 as "a vortex of broken passions, lusts, hopes, fears, and horrors."<sup>253</sup>

In Canto 15 the protagonist of the Cantos sinks into "the welsh





of mud," the "bog-suck like a whirlpool,"<sup>254</sup> but escapes with the aid of Plotinus and the petrifying mirror. The limitations of the model in its neo-platonic form, if it is used without the "crystalline spheres" which enclose Pound's universe and hold it in a state of dynamic equilibrium, is apparent in the cubist poet Paul Eluard's application of it. Georges Lemaitre describes Eluard's gravitation between the two poles of solitude and love:

Love is viewed by him as a mystic center of blazing forces, a fiery nucleus of passionate vibrations, diffusing energy throughout the whole world in ardent and pulsating waves. In its aura, every specific sensation loses its original distinctiveness and becomes identified with the spiritual Absolute. Thus love appears as a tremendous cosmic experience in which man participates anonymously through the sublime act of eternal creation. Yet if love is extended so prodigiously as to fill all the universe, its "substance" will finally dissipate itself into imperceptibility. A universe of love has as an inevitable counterpart a bleak and dismal "univers-solitude". . . . Eluard has repeatedly conjured up its dripping silence, its icy glare, its crushing and boundless desolation. All that can be seen are atoms of suffering, particles of despair, whirling in fantastic spirals, like an impalpable stellar dust in the midst of astronomical immensities. The rest is cold, indifferent barrenness--hard, ascetic insensibility--oppressive and overwhelming absence.<sup>255</sup>

The pattern of the vortex pervades all aspects of Pound's thought from his concept of the image as a kind of luminous light band, to the ethical and social concepts which he has derived from Confucianism--but it is a model that occurs in no physical system. Pound's electrons circulate in accordance with the





music of the spheres:

All rushed out and built the duomo

Went as one man without leaders

And the perfect measure took form<sup>256</sup>

In the Cantos, the past of the human community is brought into the field of present awareness in order to magnetize the environment by exposing the perfect human measure. The negative is expelled in a quasi-magical act of denunciation; the transitory vanishes in a dissipation of energy; the recurrent is carried into the center of the vortex to be propelled again into the circumferential pattern; and the permanent values shape the structure:

Beauty is difficult. . . .the plain ground  
precedes the colours

and this grass or whatever here under the tentflaps

is, indubitably, bambooiform

representative brush strokes wd/be similar

.... cheek bone, by verbal manifestation,

her eyes as in 'La Nascita'

whereas the child's face

is at Capoquadri in the fresco square over the doorway

centre background



the form beached under Helios

funge la purezza,

and that certain images be formed in the mind

to remain there

formato locho<sup>257</sup>





THE VORTICIST MOVEMENT

THE

THE VORTICIST MOVEMENT

### PART THREE

#### SOME VORTICIST DOCUMENTS



## "Affirmations. IV. As for Imagisme"

by

Ezra Pound

The term "Imagisme" has given rise to a certain amount of discussion. It has been taken by some to mean Hellenism; by others the word is used most carelessly, to designate any sort of poem in vers libre. Having omitted to copyright the word at its birth I cannot prevent its misuse. I can only say what I meant by the word when I made it. Moreover, I cannot guarantee that my thoughts about it will remain absolutely stationary. I spend the greater part of my time meditating the arts, and I should find this very dull if it were not possible for me occasionally to solve some corner of the mystery, or, at least to formulate more clearly my own thoughts as to the nature of some mystery or equation.

In the second article of this series I pointed out that energy creates pattern. I gave examples. I would say further that emotional force gives the image. By this I do not mean that it gives an "explanatory metaphor"; though it might be hard to draw an exact border line between the two. We have left false metaphor, ornamental metaphor to the rhetorician. That lies outside this





discussion.

Intense emotion causes pattern to arise in the mind--if the mind is strong enough. Perhaps I should say, not pattern, but pattern-units, or units of design. (I do not say that intense emotion is the sole possible cause of such units. I say simply that they can result from it. They may also result from other sorts of energy.) I am using this term "pattern-unit," because I want to get away from that confusion between "pattern" and "applied decoration." By applied decoration I mean something like the "wall of Troy pattern." The invention was merely the first curley-cue, or the first pair of them. The rest is repetition, is copying.

By pattern-unit or vorticist picture I mean the single jet. The difference between the pattern-unit and the picture is one of complexity. The pattern-unit is so simple that one can bear having it repeated several or many times. When it becomes so complex that repetition would be useless, then it is a picture, an "arrangement of forms."

Not only does emotion create the "pattern-unit" and the "arrangement of forms," it creates also the Image. The Image can be of two sorts. It can arise within the mind. It is then "subjective." External causes play upon the mind, perhaps; if



so, they are drawn into the mind, fused transmitted, and emerge in an Image unlike themselves. Secondly, the Image can be objective. Emotion seizing up some external scene or action carries it intact to the mind; and that vortex purges it of all save the essential or dominant or dramatic qualities and it emerges like the external original.

In either case the Image is more than an idea. It is a vortex or cluster of fused ideas and is endowed with energy. If it does not fulfil these specifications, it is not what I mean by an Image. It may be a sketch, a vignette, a criticism, an epigram or anything else you like. It may be impressionism, it may even be very good prose. By "direct treatment," one means simply that having got the Image one refrains from hanging it with festoons.

From the Image to Imagisme: Our second contention was that poetry to be good poetry should be at least as well written as good prose. This statement would seem almost too self-evident to need any defence whatsoever. Obviously, if a man has anything to say, and not a faculty for saying "exiguous" when he means "narrow," or for putting his words hindside before. Even if his thought be very slight it will not gain by being swathed in sham lace.





Thirdly, one believes that emotion is an organiser of form, not merely of visible forms and colours, but also of audible forms. This basis of music is so familiar that it would seem to need no support. Poetry is a composition or an "organisation" of words set to "music." By "music" here we can scarcely mean much more than rhythm and timbre. The rhythm form is false unless it belongs to the particular creative emotion or energy which it purports to represent. Obviously one does not discard "regular metres" because they are a "difficulty.: Any ass can say:

"John Jones stood on the floor. He saw the ceiling"  
or decasyllabically,

"John Jones who rang the bell at number eight."

There is no form of platitude which cannot be turned into iambic pentameter without labour. It is not difficult, if one has learned to count up to ten, to begin a new line on each eleventh syllable or to whack each alternate syllable with an ictus.

Emotion also creates patterns of timbre. But one "discards rhyme" not because one is incapable of rhyming neat, fleet, sweet, meet, treat, eat, feet, but because there are certain emotions or energies which are not to be represented by the over-familiar devices or patterns; just as there are certain "arrangements of form" that cannot be worked into dados.



Granted, of course, that there is great freedom in pentameter and that there are a great number of regular and beautifully regular metres fit for a number of things, and quite capable of expressing a wide range of energies or emotions.

The discovery that bad vers libre can be quite as bad as any other sort of bad verse is by no means modern. Over eleven centuries ago Rihaku (Li, Po) complained that imitators of Kutsugen (Ch'un Yuan) couldn't get any underlying rhythm into their vers libre, and that they got "bubbles not waves."

Yo ba geki tai ha Kai riu to mu giu.

"Yoyu and Shojo stirred up decayed (enervated) waves. Open current flows about in bubbles, does not move in wave lengths." If a man has no emotional energy, no impulse, it is of course much easier to make something which looks like "verse" by reason of having a given number of syllables, or even of accents, per line, than for him to invent a music or rhythm-structure. Hence the prevalence of "regular" metric. Hence also bad vers libre. The only advantage of bad vers libre is that it is, possibly, more easy to see how bad it is. . . but even this advantage is doubtful.

By bad verse, whether "regular" or "free," I mean verse which pretends to some emotion which did not assist at its parturition. I mean also verse made by those who have not sufficient skill





to make the words move in rhythm of the creative emotion.

Where the voltage is so high that it fuses the machinery, one has merely the "emotional man" not the artist. The best artist is the man whose machinery can stand the highest voltage. The better the machinery, the more precise, the stronger; the more exact will be the record of the voltage and of the various currents which have passed through it.

These are bad expressions if they lead you to think of the artist as wholly passive, as a mere receiver of impressions. The good artist is perhaps a good seismograph, but the difference between man and a machine is that man can in some degree "start his machinery going." He can, within limits, not only record but create. At least he can move as a force; he can produce "order-giving vibrations"; by which one may mean merely, he can departmentalize such part of the life-force as flows through him.

To recapitulate, then, the vorticist position; or at least my position at the moment is this:

Energy, or emotion, expresses itself in form. Energy, whose primary manifestation is in pure form, i. e. form as distinct from likeness or association can only be expressed in painting or sculpture. Its expression can vary from a "wall of Troy



pattern" to Wyndham Lewis' "Timon of Athens," or a Wadsworth wood-block. Energy expressing itself in pure sound, i. e., sound as distinct from articulate speech, can only be expressed in music. When an energy or emotion "presents an image," this may find adequate expression in words. It is very probably a waste of energy to express it in any more tangible medium. The verbal expression of the image may be reinforced by a suitable or cognate rhythm-form and by timbre-form. By rhythm-form and timbre-form I do not mean something which must of necessity have a "repeat" in it. It is certain that a too obvious "repeat" may be detrimental.

The test of invention lies in the primary pigment, that is to say, in that part of any art which is peculiarly of that art as distinct from "the other arts." The vorticist maintains that the "organising" or creative-inventive faculty is the thing that matters; and that the artist having this faculty is a being infinitely separate from the other type of artist who merely goes on weaving arabesques out of other men's "units of form."

Superficial capability needs no invention whatsoever, but a great energy has, of necessity, its many attendant inventions.

(from The New Age 16.13 [January 28, 1915], 349-50)





Introduction to the Catalogue of the Vorticist Exhibition  
Doré Galleries, London.  
Opening June 10, 1915.

by

Wyndham Lewis

This is the first exhibition of a group of painters, to whom the name Vorticist has been given. Their work has been seen in various Exhibitions, the London Group, the Allied Artists, and elsewhere; also "BLAST" was started principally as a vehicle for the propagation of their ideas, and as a sort of picture-gallery too. But this is the first time in England that a Gallery has been used for the special exhibition of nothing but the works of this tendency by English artists.

In addition to the Vorticist Group several other artists similar in aim have been invited to exhibit, and the show includes specimens of the work of every notable painter working at all in one or other of the new directions.

By Vorticism we mean (a) ACTIVITY as opposed to the taste-ful PASSIVITY of Picasso; (b) SIGNIFICANCE as opposed to the dull or anecdotal character to which the Naturalist is condemned; (c)



ESSENTIAL MOVEMENT and ACTIVITY (such as the energy of the mind) as opposed to the imitative cinematography, the fuss and hysterics of the Futurists.

(a) Picasso in his latest work is rather in the same category as a dressmaker, he matches little bits of stuff he finds lying about. He puts no life into the pieces of cloth or paper he sticks side by side, but rather CONTEMPLATES THEIR BEAUTY, placing other things near them that please. His works are monuments of taste, but too much nature-mortes the whole time.

(b) The impression received on a hot afternoon on the quays of some port, made up of the smell of tar and fish, the heat of the sun, the history of the place, cannot be conveyed by any imitation of a corner of it. The influences weld themselves into an hallucination or dream (which all the highest art always has been) with a mathematic of its own. The significance of an object in nature (that is its spiritual weight) cannot be given by stating its avoir dupois. What a thing means to you can never be rendered in terms of practical vision, or scientific imitation.

(c) Moods, ideas and visions have movements, associating themselves with objects or an object. An object also has an





ESSENTIAL movement, and essential environment, however intimate and peculiar an object it may be--even a telephone receiver or an alpine flower.

It is difficult to condense in a short foreword these ideas in such a way as to dispel the suspicion and puzzlement of the Public in looking at these pictures. In the second number of "BLAST," which is appearing in a week's time, there is a full and detailed exposition of them.

A point to insist on is that the latest movement in the arts is, as well as a great attempt to find the necessary formulas for our time, directed to reverting to ancient standards of taste, and by rigid propagandas, scavenging away the refuse that has accumulated for the last century or so.

Artists to-day have an immense commercialized mass of painting and every form of art to sanify or destroy. There has never been such a load of sugary, cheap, anecdotal and in every way pitiable much poured out by the ton--or, rather, such a spectacle socially has never been witnessed before. There is not a little grocer in Balham, bromedic Baroness in Bayswater, or dejected Princess who has not a gross of artists closely attending to his or her needs, aesthetically.



Let us give a direct example of how this revolution will work in popular ways. In poster advertisement by far the most important point is a telling design. Were the walls of London carpeted with abstractions rather than the present mass of work that falls between two stools, the design usually weakened to explain some point, the effect architecturally would be much better, and the Public taste could thus be educated in a popular way to appreciate the essentials of design better than picture-galleries have ever done.

As to the popular acceptance of such abstract works as are found here, definite POPULAR acceptance should never be aimed at. But it must be readily admitted that the audience of modern music, of more thoughtful plays, etc., will need some other food, in the matter of painting, than the perpetually relaxed and pretty professional work found still in almost any contemporary Exhibition.

Regarding the present war as a culmination of a friction of civilizations, Germany, had she not an array of great artists, musicians and philosophers to point to, would be much more vulnerable to the attacks that her truculent methods of warfare call forth on all hands. England as a civilizing power, cannot make herself too strong in these idealer ways in which Germany





traditionally excels. We feel that in efforts and initiative we are necessary to this country. After the war, Kultur (reform-kleids, Gluckesque nymphs, and melodramatic pedantry) demolished, England must no longer neglect her organization for art and kindred things as has usually happened in the past.



## "George Antheil"

by

Ezra Pound

For some years, either over my own name, or over the signature William Atheling, I have indicated the paucity of thematic invention in music; that doesn't in the least mean that I anticipated Antheil. I pointed out that music and poetry had been in alliance in the twelfth century, that the divorce of the two arts had been to the advantage of neither, and that melodic invention declined simultaneously and progressively with their divergence. The rhythms of poetry grew stupider, and they in turn affected or infected the musicians who set poems to music.

That observation was natural to me, as poet, working for twenty years with a monolineal rhythm. The horizontal construction (or mechanics of music) had gone or was, with increasing rapidity going, to pot.

It was also possible, by study of twelfth-century music, to see that melody wasn't mere improvisation. The Hindoos have given us the terms, raga and tala, the first for toneless





rhythm arrangement, the second for sequence of notes at determined pitches.

Let me say here, in my twenty-fifth or twenty-sixth parenthesis, that there are two aesthetic ideals, one the Wagnerian, which is not dissimilar from that of the Foire de Neuilly, i. e., you confuse the spectator by smacking as many of his senses as possible at every moment, this prevents his noting anything with unusual lucidity, but you may fluster or excite him to the point of making him receptive, i. e., you may slip over an emotion, or you may sell him a rubber doll or a new cake of glass-mender during the hurly-burly.

The other aesthetic has been approved by Brancusi, Lewis, the vorticist manifestoes; it aims at focussing the mind on a given definition of form, or rhythm, so intensely that it becomes not only more aware of that given form, but more sensitive to all other forms, rhythms, defined planes, or masses.

It is a scaling of eye-balls, a castigating or purging of aural cortices; a sharpening of verbal apperceptions. It is by no means an emollient.

The fulcrums of revolution in art are very small, and the academic recognition of faits accomplis usually tardy, sic: Marchetto (of Padua, in the fourteenth century, in his Pomerium)



"shows that the breve can be divided into three, four, six, eight, nine, and twelve parts, but does not admit that these new values are anything but semi-breve"; Prosdocimus de Beldemandis, in the Tractatus Practicus, shows that fourteenth century Italians "faisaient suivre à la semi-breve la minima et la semi-minima et autres notes encores dont la valeur un peu vague ocillait entre la minima et la chroma."<sup>1</sup>

To grasp the modus of Antheil's procedure one must remember that the development of musical notation has been exceedingly slow; that up to the year 1300 the written notes were not an exposition of the melody, they were a mnemonic device. A man who knew the tune or a man with a very fine ear for musical phrase could make use of them.

Couperin complains "we do not play as we write"; Dom Bedos de Celles has to warn his readers against other writers who "have not said a word about ornaments, nor of the combination of silences, held and touched notes to form articulations of the music, etc.; of the distinction between first and second quavers and of the crotchets, etc., of their inequality, etc."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Guido Gasperini, "L'Art Musical Italien au XIV siècle," in Lavignac and Laurencie's Encyclopedie de Musique (Delagrave, Paris).

<sup>2</sup>Arnold Dolmetsch, Music of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries.





We have all heard of tempo rubato, ad. lib., and so forth. To Igor Stravinsky we owe the revelation: "NO, you will not find any musical geniuses to execute this music. It would better for the composer to write down what he wants the performer to play."

Stravinsky's merit lies very largely in taking hard bits of rhythm, and noting them with great care. Antheil continues this; and these two composers mark a definite break with the "atmospheric" school; they both write horizontal music; but horizontal music has been written before; the Arabs have used it for a long time; the troubadours used it; you might have detected horizontal merits in Arnaut Daniel and Faïdit.

My own idea is that the horizontal merits faded from music (and from the rhythm of poetry) with the gradual separation of the two arts. A man thinking with mathematical fractions is not impelled toward such variety of raga as a man working with the necessary inequalities of words. But the verbal rhythm is monolinear. It can form contrapunto only against its own echo; or against a developed expectancy.

Here we must emphasise the relation of raga, tala, and harmony. Any note can follow any other, any ten notes can follow each other in any order you like, but if their arrangement I mean



their tala, their tone sequence, is of any interest it will lock their time intervals, i. e., their individual durations and the rests between them.

When counterpoint slumped into harmony, Lutheran chorales, etc., and progressively into Schönberg, this fundamental drive in music was obscured. The harmonists gave their attention to the perpendicular values, ending in a technical morass, undefined rhythms, tonal slush.

A purist and an archaeologist might have revived the precision of raga; he probably would have agreed with Dolmetsch's verbal grumble, "No, music didn't begin with Bach, it ended with Bach." (Mr. Dolmetsch didn't mean this literally, but he got something off his chest, and mine, when he said it.)

What I am driving at is that Antheil has not only given his attention to rhythmic precision, and noted his rhythms with an exactitude, which we may as well call genius, but he has invented new mechanisms, mechanisms of this particular age.

1. His large concerto for piano and orchestra is early work. I have not heard it with orchestra, but the piano part contains at least one good mechanism.

2. In "The Golden Bird" he was not wholly freed of Debussy, but he did succeed in making the "solid object." This term suggests





sculpture and is intended to, just as Debussy intended to suggest apparitions in mist.

By solid object "musically," I suppose we mean a construction or better a "mechanism" working in time-space, in which all the joints are close knit, the tones fit each other at set distances, it can't simply slide about. This new quasi-sculptural solidity is something different from the magnificent stiffness or rigidity of Bach's multi-linear mechanism.

3. In the "mechanisms" there are distinct innovations of musical action. An electric power-station has recurrences, differing from those of the minuet.

4. In the series of six piano pieces called "Sonates Sauvages" Antheil gives us the first music really suggesting Lewis' "Timon" designs.

Numbers 3, 4, and 5 are interesting experiments, the whole of this music is still in the experimental stage, which does not mean that there are no definite results. Numbers 1 and 2 are accomplished facts. The first of these sonatas "does it," the base is really a basis, the music rises and acts above it, like a projectile carrying a wire and cutting, defining the three dimensions of space.



The sixth of these sonatas seems, after the others, a retrospect. Every solid artist having made an advance by emphasising some cardinal element, returns to examine the other elements of that art. This sonata, is, by comparison with the others, soft and "feminine," by its title.

Antheil has purged the piano, he has made it into a respectable musical instrument, recognising its percussive nature. "It is like the xylophone and the cymballo."

5. In the magnificent violin sonata, the most recent of his works, he has tried something of the same sort with the violin, I mean he has made the piano sound like a pianoforte, he has used the violin for sounds that you couldn't make as well or better on the flute.

I repeat that the thorough artist is probably more sensitive to the difference between his own art and other arts, than to their resemblances. One of the marks of Antheil's authenticity is his disgust with the term "architecture," and his insistence on the term "mechanism."

Antheil is probably the first artist to use machines, I mean actual modern machines, without bathos.

Machines are not really literary or poetic, an attempt to poetise machines is rubbish. There has been a great deal of lit-





erary fuss over them. The Kiplonians get as sentimental over machines as a Dickensian does over a starved and homeless orphan on a bleak cold winterrrr's night.

Machines are musical. I doubt if they are even very pictorial or sculptural, they have form, but their distinction is not in form, it is in their movement and energy; reduced to sculptural stasis they lose raison d'être, as if their essence.

Let me put it another way, they don't confront man like the faits accomplis of nature; these latter he has to attack ab exteriore, by his observation, he can't construct 'em; he has to examine them. Machines are already an expression of his own desire for power and precision; one man can learn from them what some other man has put into them, just as he can learn from other artistic manifestations. A painting of a machine is like a painting of a painting.

The lesson of machines is precision, valuable to the plastic artist, and to literati.

Prose is perhaps only half an art. The medium of poetry is words, i.e. human symbols, conventions; they are capable of including things of nature, that is, sound quality, timbre, up to a point.

They have interior rhythm, there can be rhythm in their arrangement, even tone leadings, and these with increasing pre-



cision; but you cannot get a word back into the non-human.

It is redundancy, and therefore bad art, to use it where a less conventional humanised means will serve. Words are superfluous for certain things and inadequate for others; we have already said that a painter about to paint a sunset needs to know more about it than an author who describes it or refers to it.

I am perfectly aware that you can imitate the sound of machinery verbally, you can make new words, you can write

pan-pam vlum vlum vlan-ban, etc.

there are also mimetic words like bow-wow and mao, miaou, in Greek, Chinese, Egyptian, and other tongues, imitating the noises of animals; but these are insufficient equipment for the complete man of letters, or even for national minstrelsy. The mechanical man of futurist fiction is false pastoral, he can no more fill literature than could the bucolic man. This is perhaps an aside.

I take it that music is the art most fit to express the fine quality of machines. Machines are now a part of life, it is proper that men should feel something about them; there would be something weak about art if it couldn't deal with this new content. But to return to the vorticist demands: "Every concept, every emotion presents itself to the vivid consciousness in some primary form, it belongs to the art of that form."





I am inclined to think that machines acting in time space, and hardly existing save when in action, belong chiefly to an art acting in time space; at any rate Antheil has used them, effectively. That is a fait accompli and the academicians can worry over it if they like.

6. Thorough artists are constantly searching for the permanent elements in their art. This is a very different thing from being interested in embroideries and emollients and wanting to keep up electroplates.

The thorough artist is constaly trying for form the ideograph of "the good" in his art; I mean the ideograph of admirable compound-of-qualities that make any work of art permanent.

I think too, that all thorough artists at the outset try to put down their ideas about this, verbally, and that their notes are usually in a fairly unintelligible jargon, having a meaning for themselves, and for a very limited number of other people.

This metaphysic doesn't always get printed. Its chief characteristics are extreme seriousness, and reiteration: n.b. reiteration of certain sentences which obviously mean more to the artist than to the reader. This mass of verbiage must be taken rather as evidence of mental activity than as exposition of ideas.



The difference between this utterance and similar statements by lunatics is that the artist does attain precise utterance in his own medium. And from that precise utterance the interested reader may interpret, more or less, the artist's ambiguous, or more than ambiguous, verbal statements about life, cosmos, being, non-being, time, eternity, etc. (These are, often no worse or no more ambiguous than the general and considered statements of professed philosophers.)

I mean that from such fragmentary and confused writing the intelligent observer will induce the fact that the artist is very gravely concerned with the bases of his art, and with the relations of that art to everything else. This is very different from preciosity; archaeological preciosity; emollients; trimmings, connoisseurship; traditions regarding superfices, or the customs or fashions of the moment.

Hence the permanent resemblances of masterwork, the "revolutionary" nature of genius, the returns to the primitives, and so forth.

Antheil is supremely sensitive to the existence of music in time-space. The use of the term "fourth dimension" is probably as confusing in Einstein as in Antheil. I believe that Einstein is capable of conceiving the factor time as affecting space relations.





He does this in a mode hitherto little used, and with certain quirks that had not been used by engineers before him; though the time element enters into engineering computations; and the only lucid remarks on economics have, in our day, come from an engineer.

The x, y, and z axes of analytics would appear to me to provide for what Antheil calls the fourth dimension of music, the "oblique," but technical mathematical language is almost as obscure as Antheil's. The first of his piano sonatas shows perfectly clearly what he means. And a gang of African savages would probably illustrate what he means by the "hole in time-space."

As indication of his attempt to form the ideograph of the art, and de quoi rêvent ces jeunes gens, we turn to Antheil's criticism of other composers, the turns of phrase, the abruptness recalling Gaudier's manifestos:

"Despite his great admiration for Stravinsky we find (Der Querschnitt, Sommer, 1923) the failure of Stravinsky, the only man who seemed rhythmically and musically gifted enough to reorganise the machineries of music."

"...event of Stravinsky necessary, ...antipode to the anaemic and unmusical but marvellously vertically-calculated music of Schönberg."



"In accepting Satie as a master... we see that he [Stravinsky] was nothing but a jolly Rossini, a real musician of terrific verve and musicality in whose hands every musical machinery had to undergo a transformation... a brave and jolly Rossini in an age where composers were occupied with improvising rhapsodically on music paper after the manner of Bartok, Ornstein, Szymanowski, Bloch, and the too-late-Rachmaninoffs, ...." etc.

So much for your idols and the china shop. There is in Antheil's notes a constant tirade against improvisation.

Then we come to appreciations, tempered: "Debussy great destructionist, evolved new musical locomotion of time; genius of French salon, inhabitant of pages of Madame Bovary... ease in which he passes from the ribbon of her dressing-table to the quickness of outdoors, never more than a mile from her house."

"His piano [Debussy's] breathes and undulates with ancestral tinkle...but soft and persuasive...can music be 'impressionistic'/? is it not a term for painting alone?"

"Debussy is new and forever a great land-mark in musical composition," i. e. because of his "new propulsion of time-spaces."

"A what's-his-name Italian and the juggler Satie discovered and unfolded most of his nuances beforehand."





I take it this "what's-his-name Italian is Fanelli (Tableau Symphonique, 1883, etc.), to whom justice has long been overdue.

"Debussy, soul of ardent virgin, clear and sentimental implanted in great artistic nature."

Les Six "charming and fickle people. Everything they imitate with the utmost freshness and understanding."

"Cataclysms: Wagner, Scriabine, Bloch. It is all a little fat. Bloch however has the memory of other things. He wants to be without fat."

"Sound vibrations are the strongest and most fluid space vibrations capable of a tangible mathematic."

(There are a number of pages full of such abstract statements which are interesting only after one has heard Antheil's music.)

"...in musical history names of great men, eventually discerned only through the necessity which they have apart from others to create a new locomotion for their musicality."

"Music, the adventure of time with space."

"Architecture static...impossible term in musical criticism ...impressionism, still more imbecile term."

"Has anyone beyond Stravinsky brought forward a new propulsion of time-space, a new comprehension of musical mechanism?"



"Two men who resemble each other in mechanism but are total opposites in sensibility: Ernest Bloch... Debussian-Japanese-Mongolian tonalities... essentially Jewish, voluptuous without being sentimental."

"Szymanowski...[his music] ranges from being infinitely precious to the soul-shattering, fat iridescence of Scriabine."

"Now, emphatically necessary to break forever from the fatness of Wagner."

"'Afternoon of a Faun,' despite his professed enmity toward Wagner, crammed with marvellous alchemised 'Tristan.'"

"Bartok, while sense of time-space in the violin sonata is essentially masterful and probably his own, has done much bird-stuffing with folksongs of Hungary."

Two ways music can not go: first, purely vertical--one is no longer satisfied with static sensuality that lacks adequate machinery to move it. Second, the purely horizontal, organisation of time-spaces in single plane no longer interesting.

Schonberg "whose musical machinery is based fundamentally upon Mendelssohn."

All of which appears to me to be very good sense. As to background and general aesthetics, limiting biography to minimum: George Antheil, born Trenton, N. J., July 8, 1901, of Polish





parents; taken to Poland at age of four, returned to America at fourteen, already composing canons and fugues, studied with Von Sternberg and Bloch; performing his own compositions with Berlin Philharmonic and other mid-European orchestras in 1922. Possibly the first American or American-born musician to be taken seriously. If America has given or is to give anything to general aesthetics it is presumably an aesthetic of machinery, of porcelain baths, of cubic rooms painted with Ripolin, hospital wards with patent dustproof corners and ventilating appliances. Only when these spaces become clean enough, large enough, sufficiently nickelplated, can a sense of their proportion and arrangement breed a desire for order, in that arrangement; from which perhaps a beauty, a proportion of painting and architecture. There we must leave it.

But Antheil has made a beginning; that is in writing music that couldn't have been written before. "Interpreting," as the awful word is, his age, but doing it without the least trace of rhetoric. He is not local. His musical world is a world of steel bars, not of old stone and ivy. There are his analogies to Lewis's "Timon," to the "ice-blocks" of Picasso. There is the break from the negative (in the geometric sense) or suspended, fluid quality of Chopin and Debussy. There is edge. There is



the use of the piano, no longer melodic, or cantabile, but solid, unified as one drum. I mean single sounds produced by multiple impact; as distinct from chords, which are sort of chains or slushes of sound. That the fifth sonata is built up on memories of peasant violins in Poland doesn't in the least break the unity of this series, or turn the work into romanticised reminiscence. It is the actual sound, time-spacing of this violin playing, i. e., the proper musician's content of it, not its literary associations, that George Antheil has utilised.

(from The Criterion 2. 7 [April, 1924], 321-31)





"Plain Home-builder: Where is your Vorticist?"

by

Wyndham Lewis

For the past twenty or twenty-five years in the Anglo-Saxon countries outraged protests have arisen at every fresh manifestation of "advanced" art, whether in sculpture, painting, architecture, or the applied arts--and, to a lesser extent, regarding "modernism" in novels, plays, and verse. On the side of those engaged in these outrageous activities many attempts have been made to conversion: but the Anglo-Saxon public (this applies more to England than to America) has remained obdurate, and has refused even to adopt a tolerant attitude, much less to be converted.

A small number of "highbrow" men and women meanwhile--a very small number--have supported these "extreme" expressions of cubist, surrealist expressionist art. A handful of modernist villas have been run up; a few big factories have gone cubist. Women's dress has been affected more than most things, but Victorian modes have always routed the "robot" fashion, whenever it came to a stand-up fight. One shop in a hundred has acquired a chromium-plated modernist façade, but only in the very large cities.



Yet one swallower of the new forms of expression does not make a summer--for the artist! And for one who was a swallower there have been a thousand who were non-swallowers--who with teeth set have violently rejected the medicine. For a bitter pill it is--why deny it?--this art of the most "modern" schools. In this country architects like Etchells, Holden, Connell and Ward, Tecton, Erberton, Tait, Welles Coates, Chermayeff, McGrath, Fry; painters and sculptors like Henry Moore, Epstein, Kauffer, and the Nashes are in the nature of paregoric or codliver oil to the oversweet Anglo-Saxon palate; about that there is no question.

Those modernist suites of furniture--even "attractive" up to a point--are undeniably ultra-puritan in conception; far too bare and cheerless to the average eye. An "ideal home" furnished with these uncompromisingly severe bookcases, rugs, steel chairs and aluminium beds, angular armchairs and so forth, would be ideal only for the very few. And one of Mr. Henry Moore's pinhead Titanesses--highly prolific of foetus-like stone babies, certainly, but otherwise very remote from routine humanity--would scarcely be found by poor little Mr. Omnes to add anything to the gaiety of his interior. Nor would a cornfield by Mr. Nash even help matters, suspended upon an empty wall, above a nest of gloomy boxes full of Mr. Gollancz's harshly-coloured books (as they would appear in





the eyes of the average book reader).

What is all this about, the puzzled man-in-the-street has asked, over and over again, ever since in the far fourteens of Nineteen Hundred, with the war about to break, the Vorticist assailed his senses with images of, to him, a revolting ugliness? It is because I do not think that the Plain Gallery-goer (to give the "Plain Reader" a brother!) or the Plain Home-builder (to give him another brother) choosing an architectural box to live in and choosing "antique" furnishings on the one hand, or modernistic furnishings on the other, with which to line his nest--it is because this still puzzled person has not yet received quite the fairest answer possible, that I am addressing myself to the task of lifting the veil for him a little higher; and in a way that, I believe, has not up to the present been attempted.

If I seem to fetch from rather far my explanations I can only reply that they do lie very much off the beaten track. You have to go into the fastnesses of esoteric politics and into the most tortuous labyrinths of the religionist-at-bay, to discover the impulse that outwardly manifests itself in Mr. Kauffer's Tube Posters, or the posters of his school; in the architectural plans of Mr. Wells Coates; in Mr. Eliot's crossword puzzles in the place of poems (as it seems to the uninitiated); in Mr. Epstein's



Underground Building statuary; or Mr. Henry Moore's or Mr. Lambert's plastic experiments. With this warning, namely, that the road to understanding of the "inhumanity," the "abstractness," the "ugliness," of extreme contemporary art, is not (as indeed might be anticipated) an easy one or a path of roses for the humble Home-builder or Gallery-goer in search of enlightenment, I will proceed.

I am myself, of course, one of the chief offenders in the matter of all this horrible "inhuman" modernity. It was I who was the arch-vorticist; and so recently as last week I perpetrated a picture which, when it is exhibited, however much the art critics (a fine body of men!) applaud it, will not perhaps please you. I say all this to make it clear at the start that you are getting this from the horse's mouth--or from between the dragon's teeth if you like that better!

It may be as well to explain one feature of Vorticism which has a great deal of bearing upon what is being discussed here. I refer to the fact that Vorticism (the characteristic movement with which all these modes of extreme modernism began in England) was, in a sense, a substitute of architecture for painting. It was not only that the Vorticist was peculiarly preoccupied with the pictorial architectonics at the bottom of picture-making--the logical skeleton





of the sensuous pictorial idea. It was more than that. "Vorticism" was a movement initiated by a group of painters, but it was aimed essentially at an architectural reform (I was almost about to say, rather than a pictorial reform!). My pamphlet entitled Architects, where is your Vortex? (written a couple of years after the war) demonstrates this fact sufficiently plainly even in its title. And what I, as a vorticist, was saying to the architect was: "Produce a shell more in conformity with the age in which we live! If you do not do so, it will be in vain for us to produce pictures of a new and contemporary nature."

But the pictures produced by myself, and other painters of similar aims, and which have been produced continuously since that time, were often rather exercises in architectural theory--rather pictorial spells, as it were, cast by us, designed to attract the architectural shell that was wanting--than anything else. We were compelled at the outset--since the architect had lagged behind, and the shells, the appropriate walls, were wanting--to go over into the field of pure architecture more than otherwise would have been necessary, or indeed desirable. And, in the early stages of this movement, we undoubtedly did sacrifice ourselves as painters to this necessity to reform de fond en comble the world in which a picture must exist--for its existence is obviously



contingent on, and conditioned by, what the architect produces. In the heat of this pioneer action we were even inclined to forget the picture altogether in favour of the frame, if you understand me. We were so busy thinking about the sort of linear and spatial world in which the picture would have its being and thinking about it in such a concrete way, that we sometimes took the picture a little for granted. It became merely a picture X--a positional abstraction, as it were.

But what has happened, in the sequel? Well, the appropriate shells--the buildings--have been, in a small way it is true, forthcoming. But they, too, have forgotten the picture! Or rather, it has turned out that the architect (having got his Vortex at last) has conceived it usually in such a manner as potentially to exclude the picture altogether from his dogmatic vorticist or cubic walls.

Almost all the photographs you see of "ideal homes"--in the advertisement pages of periodicals, or in periodicals, or articles devoted to the furnishing of a "modernistic home"--are pictureless, or nearly so. One picture, or two, at the most, relieve the aggressive severity of these advertised dwelling rooms. And for this we (Vorticists and others) are somewhat to blame.





But to say that we are altogether to blame would not be true. For there are other factors, of immense importance, behind these puritanic landscapes of domestic bliss, and over-mathematicized architectures, and it is those that, in this article, I have particularly proposed to canvas.

So at last, after a false start, as it were, just now--let us get under way and let us start at the beginning, upon the primeval religious and economic foundations of everything, whether it be the Katoubia at Marakech, a short story of Tolstoy's, or Mah Jong or Ping Pong.

I have said in a book, dealing with these subjects, that some people suffer fools gladly: and I boldly asserted that I was one of those people that did so--that for me the fool was welcome--that to the "little children" of whom the Kingdom of Heaven is composed should be added the Fool, for he has a similar claim upon us as have the evangelist bambinos; and in any case, here on earth, is not the Fool, as it were, the inert reservoir upon which genius draws? His opaque and lustreless eyes, his heavy features, large animal jowl, shallow brow like that of the Roman gladiator--that is our fundamental humanity. Upon that dull folly everything that we erect must be built. But it is the reverse of a quicksand.



It is a rugged conglomerate, a thoroughly conservative mass--stable, if deadly stupid.

Such sensations as these are the sensations at the back of much of the architecture, painting and sculpture, and applied arts, and books as well, which have given rise--and still continue to do so--to such bitter controversy. It is because we have in a sense accepted the Fool, even proceeded to the worship of the Fool, that the Fool is so scandalized and angry with what we do!

For the Plain Home-builder to understand why his home--if it is to be "ideal"--should, by all rights, be very bare and very unsensuous, he must be directed, to start with, to the study of the religious attitudes peculiar to his time. (It is best, I think, to take the religious first, as the political would be liable to confuse him.) When I say "religious," I do not, of course, mean the "simple faith" that is better than "Norman blood" of the Plain church-goer, or anything so straightforward as that. I mean the particular brand of intellectualism which flourishes at the moment as a parasite upon the fundamental religious emotions.

During the latter decades of the nineteenth century, professional religionists were locked in a death-embrace, or so it seemed, with Natural Science. Charles Darwin, conspicuously, had dealt a knock-out blow to the dogma of the Fall--or so it





seemed: for humanity learnt from him that it had "descended" from a lower form of life--not "fallen" from a higher. To the "forthright" Northern children of the Reformation these "facts" of Darwin's appeared pretty difficult to reconcile with the Old Testament myth of the Creation (borrowed from Babylon, that conspicuously impure State), with which they had been familiar from childhood. (And when they learnt, from Sir James Fraser and others, that Judaism had taken over Adam and Eve, lock, stock and barrel, from other religions, that did not help matters, of course.)

To telescope into a few words these tremendous events, the Christian religion did not disappear, as many thought it might. Eventually it was recognized that there were, after all, more things in Heaven and Earth than were mentioned in the philosophy of Darwin and Huxley. The "stubborn facts" of Natural Science were "found out" and seen not to be so "stubborn" as all that, and there were anyway other stubborn facts with which Science showed itself incompetent to deal. And after these homeric struggles the professional religionist came up smiling, if I may be allowed to put it in that familiar way--but smiling a little wryly. And, further, a good deal of the scientific attitudes had been absorbed in this desperate corps-à-corps by



the badly-shaken Pillars of the Church--for it had been necessary to engage Science with its own weapons, and the weapons were retained after the worst of the encounter was over.

This not triumphant, but relatively satisfactory, emergence of the religious mind from the dark period of Evolutionary eclipse, is put on record, with great brilliance, by the late Lord Balfour in his famous book, The Foundations of Belief.

The Plain Gallery-goer, or the Plain Home-builder (who beyond question has been asking himself with growing impatience what on earth, or in heaven, religious controversy has to do with chromium-plated easy-chairs or cubist bungalows) cannot be expected to wish to follow the late Lord Balfour in his eloquent exposé of "the emotional adequacy," or, rather, "inadequacy," of the ends prescribed by the Naturalistic Ethics. So he may be willing to take my word for it, when I point out that these Naturalistic Ethics were fairly closely related (if you devote more than a cursory examination to these matters) to the Naturalistic AEsthetics. And it was the recognition of the inadequacy of the Naturalistic AEsthetic that was primarily responsible for the downfall of the bourgeois art of the nineteenth century (the stronghold of which, in Great Britain was--and still is!--the Royal Academy).





But the Naturalistic Ethic, and its "beautiful" sentient creation, got pretty badly knocked about by Natural Science, as was indicated by Balfour. The ascetic values of the mystical religious mind fared better, and, as I have said, emerged--not intact, but not at all destroyed. Nineteenth Century Science, however, left its mark upon all that was, as it were, physical. Religion has had its "come back," but in its grimmer, contemplative, aspects, with its vows of poverty in evidence, to an impoverished world. It has come back because Man has fallen upon hard times and is in very great distress. It has come back attuned to an apocalyptic situation, armed with the despairs of the earliest Fathers of the Church.

In an often-quoted passage, Lord Balfour asks what man turns out to be after all, from the point of view of Science--according to anything that Science by itself is able to teach us. And it transpires--he has no difficulty in showing that--that Man is after all not the final cause of the universe: "His very existence is an accident, his story a brief and transitory episode in the life of one of the meanest of the planets. Of the combination of causes which first converted a dead organic compound into the living progenitors of humanity, Science, indeed, as yet knows nothing. It is enough that from such beginnings, famine, dis-



ease, and mutual slaughter, fit nurses of the future lords of creation, have gradually evolved, after infinite travail, a race with conscience enough to feel that it is vile, and intelligence enough to know that it is insignificant."

This passage is so extremely well known that I dare say even the Plain Home-builder I am especially addressing will be familiar with it. It registers, with its bland declamation, a very low temperature indeed (as the few lines I have just quoted will have shown, I think).

Now Lord Balfour, having rubbed in, to the full extent of his mournful eloquence, the meaning of what Science teaches--namely the insignificance, the worthlessness, the absurdity, of Man and all his works, asks his readers whether this may not perhaps be utilized to turn the attitude of this miserable half-animal (this twin of the "miserable sinner", to "what is Abiding and what is Eternal." And Man, in the mood engendered by this depressing revelation of his unimportance, nay futility--is in no mood, it may be imagined, to give an emphatic No. That this depressing and degrading picture may be--has been and some will think should be--utilized in the field of art as well as in the field of religion, is what I am seeking to demonstrate here. And I am among those who, with certain reservations, believe that it





should be.

The absence of sensuous appeal--the purism, or to give it its ethical equivalent, the puritanism--of the great contemporary movements in architecture, house-furnishing, sculpture, painting and design, proceeds ultimately from the same source as--and proceeds hand-in-hand with--the new evangelism, which is to be seen as much within the frontiers of the Roman Catholic communion, as in other--and more traditionally "puritanising"--folds.

The recrudescence of asceticism, if we can call it that--perhaps it would be better to say the popularization of the ascetic principle: the re-dehumanization of a religion, which was in origin anti-human (in the sense that to be anti-family, with Saint Augustine, may be described as to be anti-human) and which has oscillated between that and an accommodation to the all-too-human principle: all this can be matched in the political field. Indeed the identity of temper in every department of life is today remarkable. The more closely organized human life becomes, the more perfect this identity will be.

So, although I began with religion, I could equally well have begun with politics--except for the reason I have given. In both "advanced" religious and "advanced" political theory there is the same cold-shouldering of the "bourgeois" moral values--notably



of the humanitarian values. The value of human life--to take only that one value, as typical of the rest--the stocks of that value have never stood lower than they do today. We find the world rushing headlong towards further, and yet more disastrous and diabolical, wars.

But the traditional guardians--religious and political--of the humanitarian values do not seem to turn a hair at the thought of bigger and better bombs, laden with poison, for the destruction of "alien" cities. (I merely refer to this to make good my point--not in censure, I need not say; that would be quite out of place in such an article as this.)

If you wished to link up still further this network of dehumanist principles, you could not do better than turn to the controversy of five or six years ago regarding Humanism in America. Actually a number of pseudo-religionists and political extremists were collected together by somebody or other, and unleashed at the throat of that benign and highly gifted figure, the late Professor Babbitt of Harvard, the principle representative of the so-called "Humanism" in America. While agreeing with much of the criticism (for Babbitt did lay himself open to the jibe that he was a genteel embodiment of Bostonian America, and his "inner check" was an ideal target) I could not help wonder-





ing at the time just why this benevolent old gentleman should have aroused such evident animosity. However, that is neither here nor there. What I wish to stress is that the anti-humanist can very easily become, if he is not that already, the anti-human. How the notorious inhuman characteristics of so much contemporary art and thought might have something to do with mass attacks upon humanism, is not very difficult to see. And that non-human principle--so characteristic of the art of Asia, in contrast to that of Europe--promises a finer standard of art, whatever else you may think about it, upon purely human grounds.

I will proceed now to the final unravelment of the modernistic mysteries. First, Man, with a capital M, was not the centre of the universe for a Chinese or Japanese artist, in the way that he has been that, mostly, for the European. A fish, bird, tiger, fly, or frog entered his pictorial universe upon an equal footing with the human biped, at whom he looked, true artist that he was, as if he himself had been a stork rather than a fellow-man. This was an inhumanity, according to Hellenic standards. Or take an obvious case from everyday life: the surgeon, although he may be a very human person, is committed to a hard-boiled attitude once he enters his hospital: in the interests of humanity, even, he must be "inhuman"--efficiency demands it. But any man of



science is compelled to make himself into a depersonalized machine. All that is obvious enough; but what is less so, although equally true, is that the artist, as much as the scientist, must exclude as far as possible the specifically human from the organization of his intellect. In his way, it is incumbent upon him to be just as cold-blooded as the efficient surgeon or the duellist: his eye must be as detached, his hand as firm as theirs.

A time of great poverty--of "want in the midst of plenty"--such as ours, is economically disastrous for the artist. And as to the Communist State, that does not, on the face of it, sound a very promising place for the artist, either. But on the other hand the "Bourgeois" society, so bitterly celebrated by Flaubert, is not ideal for the artist either. Inflated prices for "old masters," side-by-side with "chocolate box" standards--or magazine-cover standards: that is what you arrive at in any Banker's Olympus.

The artist may, of his natural bent, be as gloomy as the poets Crabbe or Webster; but even so he is probably better off in an age when a certain cheerfulness prevails, a certain over-plus vitality rather than in such a grim and artificial bankrupted society as ours, with its atmosphere of the last and gloomiest plate in a very, very wicked Rake's Progress--where each month seems the last before the lights will go out upon civilization for ever.





And unless, surrendering to the prevalent despair, he ceases to be an artist, he will not thank the religionist, either, for popping into the Waste Land of the post-war, rubbing his hands with professional glee over this spectacle of desolation--of dying industry, languishing art, and general paralysis of will and of intellect.

Having admitted all this, we come to the paradox of this same artist applauding many of the features peculiar to this frugal and denuded--"nudist" and needy--scene, and having indeed been in part responsible for them (as was the Vorticist, as I have said). Whatever the reason may be (and whatever may happen in the sequel) the art of painting, to take only that, has not been so much alive for a couple of centuries, at least, as it is today. All of the non-human influences I have been discussing operate in favour of its being of a high standard of excellence--if not commercially prosperous, which is another matter. The disappearance of spare cash from the pocket of the Public may certainly in the end lead to the extinction of the fine arts; but, in the meanwhile, the severity of the intellectual ideal has helped them immensely.

So, as to those modernist interiors (such as you see advertised in the luxury-magazine)--those interiors obviously designed for a particularly puritanic athlete of robotic tastes, with an itch for the rigours of the anchorite, and a sentimental passion for



metal as opposed to wood, and a super-Victorian conviction that cleanliness is next to godliness. What are we to say regarding them?

Well, first of all, it is far better to have nothing on the walls than vulgar and trivial things; and it must always be remembered that the average athlete--or tennis-girl turned wife, or golfing-motorist become home-builder--possesses no taste at all, and should if possible be restrained from buying those coloured prints of comic Bonzos he naturally favours and putting them up on his walls. For him a perfectly blank wall is the only decent solution. He is what "bourgeois" civilization has made him. He should put himself humbly in the hands of a competent modernist designer, and cubist-bungalow architect, and allow them to ration him, very strictly indeed, in the matter of everything barring strict necessities--tables, chairs, lamps and bookshelves for the detritus of his "mystery" literature, and to be the trash-boxes of his Crime-Club sequences.

But to say that that "ideal home," of that spoilt child of the Machine-age, is in fact ideal, or is at all final, would indeed be absurd, and criminally discouraging. He is not an ultimate flower exactly--he is not the end of a progress! On the contrary, he is an embryo, as it were, a foetus of what should be--let us square





our shoulders, and say shall be--it will do no harm. That his bungalow reception-room should be as bare as a cave is right and proper, because he is in fact a cave-man. But he is a cave-man who has no art--but only a cave. The marvellous art of the Altamira Caves would be as appropriate in his cave as in those at Altamira, or any others, if had reached that stage of cultivation; but he has not. He is too primitive as yet, so there are no cave-paintings. He had evacuated all the bric-a-brac he was born with. He has not yet had time to furnish intellectually, at all, his cubist cavern. It is as yet the Plain Home-builder's spartan nest--that is the idea. He is proletariat too--the newest of the new poor; the first swallow of the Anglo-Saxon Bolshevvy that is to be. But that is just a skeleton of a much richer existence, we must at least hope. And in the meanwhile, there is nothing whatever to prevent you from putting as many pictures up--upon these immaculate, sinisterly puritanic, walls--as you have the taste to choose and the money to buy. You must not take these spotless polar models of the "ideal" interior too seriously. They are a doll's-house for a sports-girl robot, yes. But they have a great deal in their favour. And it is up to you to make them habitable--even disorderly.



You should not be afraid of desecrating these spotless and puritanic planes and prudish cubes; and it is up to you, after all, to refuse to be made into a sedate athletic doll--into an exhibit, like a show-piece for a lecturer, or in an interview with "the perfect proletarian, in the newest frugal, least domestic, prize-puritan-parlour." Modern furniture, the best of it, is exceedingly nice and much better suited to the requirements of all of us than the old--to put it at its lowest, for its lines are often of great interest apart from that, and visually suggestive of much that no Plain Home-builder need worry his head about; and likewise the little cubist-bungalow. And you can with advantage hang any picture on the most modernist wall--or any number of pictures too--from a Medici reproduction of Ucello's Battle--a Rafael, or a Rowlandson--to an "abstract" design by Mr. Wyndham Lewis, the writer of this article. There is no occasion to allow pictures to be abolished--it is no use learning about modern architecture and furniture if you do not learn about modern pictures too; unless you wish to exist as the least imaginative of cave-men or cave-women, as, of course, the average must do. But I have not been addressing myself to an average Plain Home-builder.

(from The Architectural Review, 76.456 [November, 1934], 155-8)









William Roberts. Vorticists at the Tour Eiffel.







Jacob Epstein. A Metal Torso [Rock Drill].







Henri Gaudier-Brzeska. The Dancer.







William Roberts. The Toe Dancer.







Edward Wadsworth. A Short Flight.









Wyndham Lewis. A drawing from the portfolio  
Timon of Athens, 1913.







Wyndham Lewis. A drawing from the portfolio  
Timon of Athens, 1913.





# BLAST

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Wyndham Lewis. Cover Design, Blast 2, 1915.





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Wyndham Lewis. The Vorticist.







Wyndham Lewis. Plan of War.



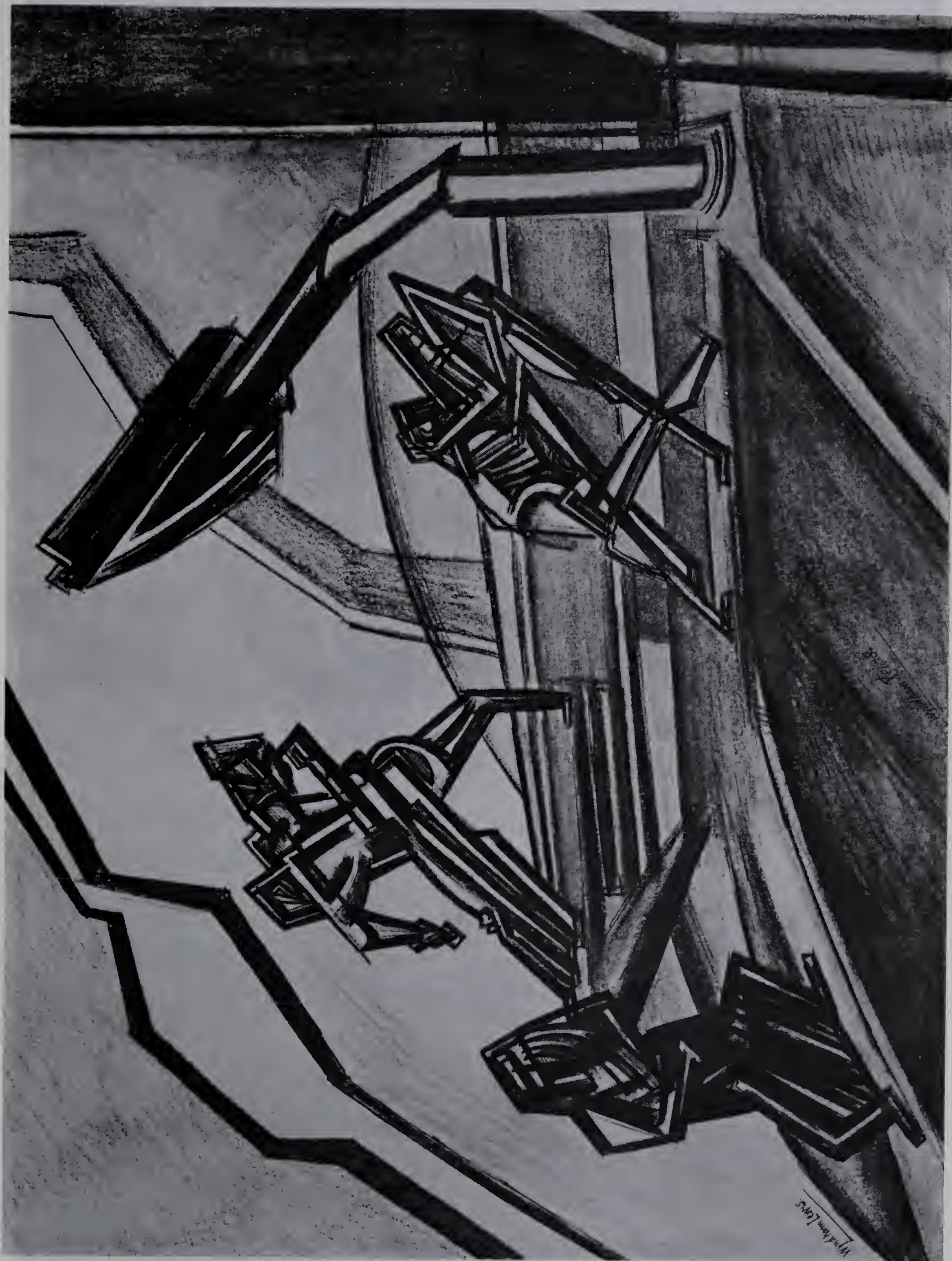




Wyndham Lewis. Portrait of an Englishwoman.





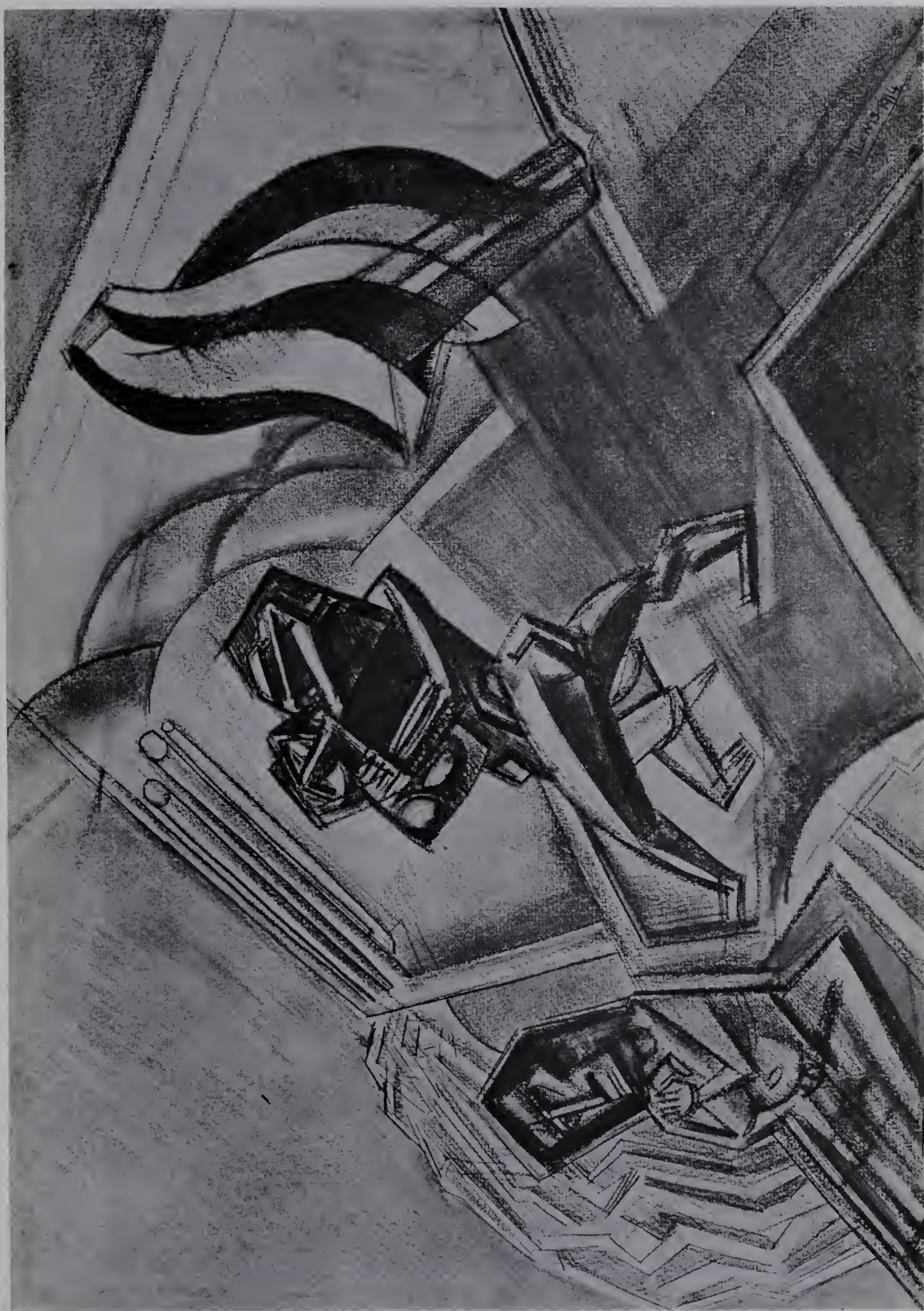


Wyndham Lewis. Combat No. 2.









Wyndham Lewis. Combat No. 3.







Wyndham Lewis. Battery Shelled.







Wyndham Lewis. Sunset among Michelangelos.



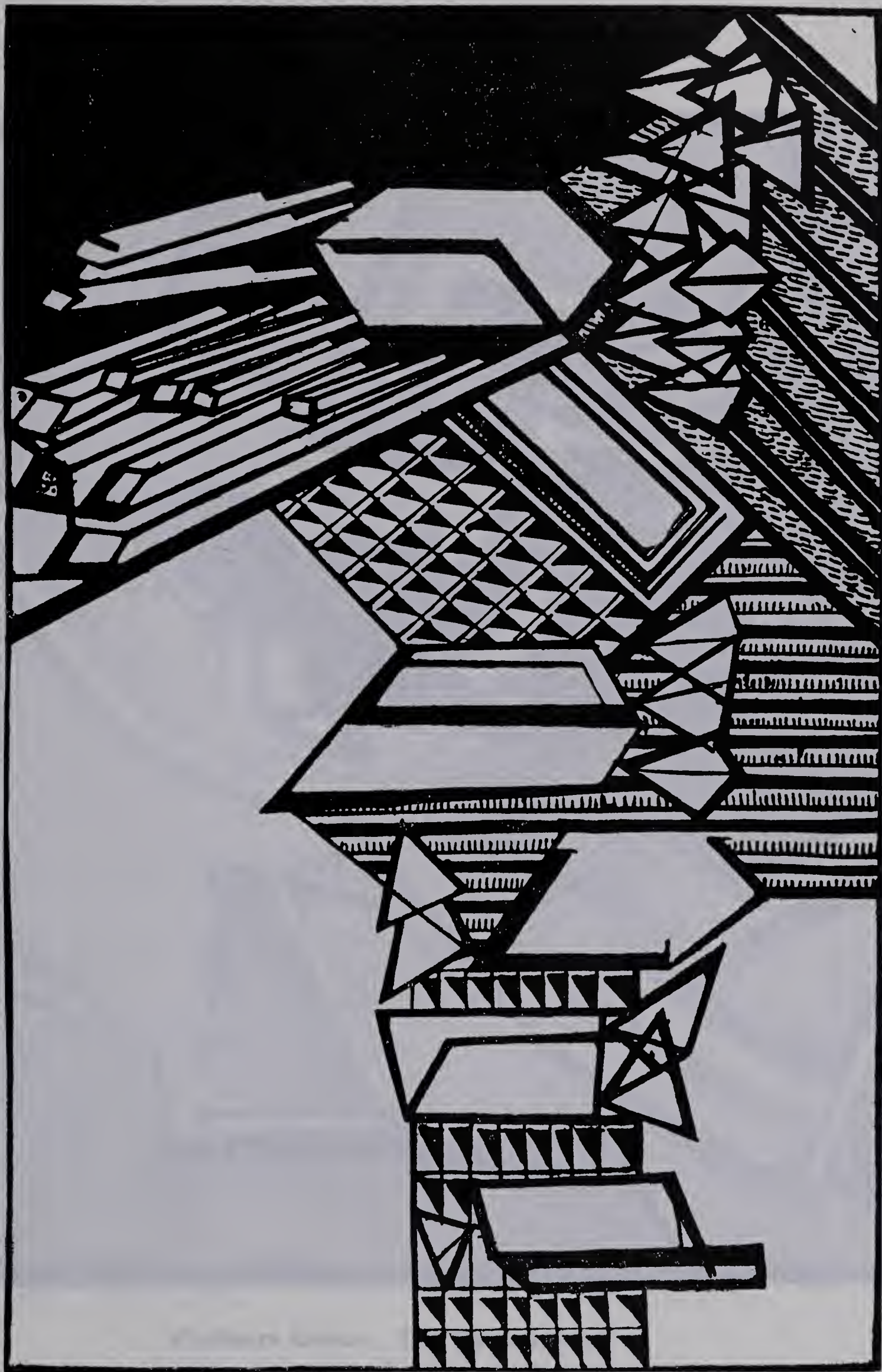




Wyndham Lewis. The Enemy of the Stars.







Frederick Etchells. Progression.





Typical building - Hospital





Wyndham Lewis. The Centauress.





## FOOTNOTES

### Preface

<sup>1</sup>G. Lemaître, From Cubism to Surrealism in French Literature (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1945), p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>Pound, "D'Artagnan Twenty Years After," Criterion 16.65 (1937), 609.

<sup>3</sup>"These new men have made me see form, have made me more conscious of the sky where it is just down between houses, of the bright pattern of sunlight which the bath water throws up on the ceiling, of the great V's of light that dart through the chinks over the curtain rings, all these are new chords, new keys of design" (Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir, London: The Marvell Press, 1960), pp. 126.

<sup>4</sup>Pound, "D'Artagnan Twenty Years After," 616-7.

<sup>5</sup>C. Emery, Ideas in a Action (Coral Gables, Fla.: University of Miami Press, 1958), p. 71.

<sup>6</sup>H. Kenner, The Poetry of Ezra Pound (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p. 58.

<sup>7</sup>"Periplum, not as land looks on a map/but as sea bord seen by men sailing," Canto 59 (The Cantos of Ezra Pound London: Faber and Faber, 1954), p. 339.

### Part One--The Vorticist Movement

<sup>1</sup>J. Rothenstein, Modern English Painters: Lewis to Moore, (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1956), p. 128.

<sup>2</sup>B. Fry, Vision and Design (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1961), p. 188.

<sup>3</sup>H. Read, The Meaning of Art, (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1956), p. 144.





<sup>4</sup>Lewis, "The Cubist Room" The Egoist 1.1 (Jan. 1914), 9.

<sup>5</sup>[October, 1913] signed by F. Etchells, C. Hamilton, W. Lewis and E. Wadsworth, in The Letters of Wyndham Lewis, ed. W. K. Rose, (London: Methuen, 1963), pp. 49-50.

<sup>6</sup>Lewis, "The Cubist Room," 9.

<sup>7</sup>Reprinted in The Letters of Wyndham Lewis, 57.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 57.

<sup>9</sup>In Pound, Gaudier-Brzeska, 35.

<sup>10</sup>E. Japson, Memories of an Edwardian and Neo-Georgian (London: Richards, 1937), p. 155.

<sup>11</sup>O. Sitwell, Great Morning (London: Macmillan, 1948), p. 208.

<sup>12</sup>Pound, in Gaudier-Brzeska, p. 34.

<sup>13</sup>R. Aldington, Life for Life's Sake, (New York: Viking Press, 1941), p. 108.

<sup>14</sup>W. B. Yeats, Letter to J. B. Yeats, March 14, (?1916), The Letters of W. B. Yeats (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954), p. 608. Yeats many years later described his own philosophic system as "stylistic arrangements of experience comparable to the cubes in the drawing of Wyndham Lewis and to the ovoids in the sculpture of Brancusi." A Vision (London: Macmillan, 1961), p. 25.

<sup>15</sup>W. B. Yeats, Letter to Lady Gregory, Dec. 10, 1909, Letters, p. 543.

<sup>16</sup>Eliot in his essay "Ezra Pound" notes that "to me, at least, Yeats did not appear, until after 1917, to be anything but a minor survivor of the '90's. (After that date, I saw him differently. I remember well the impression of the first performance of The Hawk's Well, in a London drawing room, with a celebrated Japanese dancer in the role of the hawk, to which Pound took me. And thereafter one saw Yeats rather as a more eminent contemporary than as an elder from whom one could learn)." "Ezra Pound," reprinted



in Ezra Pound. A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. W. Sutton (Englewood Cliffs, N. J. : Prentice Hall, 1963), p. 17.

<sup>17</sup>Canto 82, pp. 559-60. Pound's recognition of a divergence of interest between himself and Yeats has always been tempered by a feeling of respect for the quality of Yeats's achievement. Reviewing Yeats's latest work in 1914, Pound had noted that there was "no need for a poet to repair each morning of his life to the Piazza dei Signori to turn a new sort of somersault; and that Mr. Yeats is so assuredly an immortal that there is no need for him to recast his style to suit our winds of doctrine," The Literary Essays of Ezra Pound (London: Faber and Faber, 1954), p. 378.

<sup>18</sup>Pound letter to Isobel W. Pound, November, 1913, The Letters of Ezra Pound (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p. 63.

<sup>19</sup>P. Selver, Orage and the New Age Circle (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1959), p. 33.

<sup>20</sup>Pound letter to Patrician Hutchins, February 8, 1958, quoted in Patricia Hutchins, Ezra Pound's Kensington (London: Faber and Faber, 1965), p. 104.

<sup>21</sup>Reprinted in Hugh Kenner, The Poetry of Ezra Pound, p. 308.

<sup>22</sup>F. M. Ford, "Thus to Revisit," The Dial 69.3 (Sept. 1920), pp. 241-2.

<sup>23</sup>"The Pole," The English Review, 2 (May, 1909), pp. 255-65; "Some Innkeepers and Bestre," 2 (June, 1909), pp. 471-84; and "Les Saltimbanques," 3 (August, 1909), pp. 76-87. An essay appeared in The New Age a few months later. ("Our Wild Body," The New Age 7.1 (May 5, 1910), pp. 8-10.)

<sup>24</sup>Lewis, Rude Assignment (London: Hutchinson, [1950]), p. 122.

<sup>25</sup>C. R. W. Nevinson, Paint and Prejudice (London: Methuen, 1937), p. 63.





<sup>26</sup>Pound, Ripostes of Ezra Pound (London: Stephen Swift, 1912), p. 58.

<sup>27</sup>Lewis letter to Beatrice Hastings, [ca. 1914], The Letters, p. 63.

<sup>28</sup>Reprinted in Hugh Kenner, The Poetry of Ezra Pound, p. 308.

<sup>29</sup>T. E. Hulme, "Modern Art. IV--Mr. David Bomberg's Show," The New Age 15.10 (July 9, 1914), p. 232. Italics mine.

<sup>30</sup>Canto 80, p. 541.

<sup>31</sup>R. S. Flint, "The History of Imagism," The Egoist 2.5 (May 1, 1915), p. 71.

<sup>32</sup>Pound, The New Age 10.16 (February 5, 1912), p. 370.

<sup>33</sup>Pound, Review of Ford Madox Ford's "High Germany," Poetry Review 1.3 (March 1912), p. 133.

<sup>34</sup>Pound, Patria Mia and The Treatise on Harmony (London: Peter Owen, 1962), p. 19.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>37</sup>Patricia Hutchins in Ezra Pound's Kensington (p. 135) reports a conversation with Flint in which he indicates that this note was written by Pound and was revised slightly by both Flint and Pound after Flint originally refused to sign it.

<sup>38</sup>R. S. Flint, "Imagisme," Poetry 1.6, p. 199.

<sup>39</sup>Pound letter to Alice Corbin Henderson, October, 1913, The Letters, p. 61.

<sup>40</sup>Pound, Literary Essays, p. 56.

<sup>41</sup>Pound letter to William Carlos Williams, 19 December, 1913, The Letters, p. 65.



<sup>42</sup>Pound, "The New Sculpture," The Egoist 1.4 (February 16, 1914), p. 67.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>44</sup>W. Roberts, "A Press View at the Tate Gallery," [9].

<sup>45</sup>G. Wagner, Wyndham Lewis. A Portrait of the Artist as Enemy (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957), p. 130.

<sup>46</sup>Catalogue to the exhibition, "Wyndham Lewis and Vorticism," Tate Gallery, 1956, pp. 6-7.

<sup>47</sup>Quoted in R. T. Clough, Futurism (New York: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1961), p. 201.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>51</sup>The Artist's Introduction to the Catalogue of Gino Severini's Exhibition, Marlborough Gallery, April, 1913, quoted in Rothenstein, Modern English Painters: Lewis to Moore, p. 130.

<sup>52</sup>Quoted in The Dada Painters and Poets, ed. R. Motherwell, (New York: Wittenborn, Schultz, 1951), p. xxiv.

<sup>53</sup>J. Epstein, Let There Be Sculpture (London: Michael Joseph, 1940), p. 73.

<sup>54</sup>Nevinson, Paint and Prejudice, p. 61.

<sup>55</sup>Lewis, Blasting and Bombardiering (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1937), pp. 36-7.

<sup>56</sup>Nevinson, Paint and Prejudice, pp. 58-60.

<sup>57</sup>Nevinson claims in Paint and Prejudice (p. 60) that he suggested the title for Blast.

<sup>58</sup>Arbuthnot appears to have been a mythical signatory.





<sup>59</sup> Lewis, Blast 2, 5.

<sup>60</sup> Lewis, Introduction to the Catalogue of the Vorticist Exhibition, Doré Galleries, June, 1915.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>62</sup> The view of vorticism as solely a movement in painting that Lewis later expressed on some occasions does, however, make its first appearance in the second issue of Blast where Lewis describes the periodical as "run chiefly by Painters and for Painting," p. 7.

<sup>63</sup> Pound, Gaudier-Brzeska, p. 84.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 121.

<sup>66</sup> Pound, Literary Essays, p. 400.

<sup>67</sup> Pound, Blast 1, p. 33.

<sup>68</sup> Fry, Vision and Design, pp. 17, 22.

<sup>69</sup> Lewis, Blast 2, p. 5.

<sup>70</sup> Lewis, Blast 1, pp. 18-19.

<sup>71</sup> Lewis, Introduction to the Catalogue of the Vorticist Exhibition, Doré Galleries, June, 1915, [3].

<sup>72</sup> Lewis, Blast 1, p. 147.

<sup>73</sup> Pound, Gaudier-Brzeska, p. 82.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>75</sup> Pound, Blast 1, p. 153.

<sup>76</sup> Hulme, Speculations (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960), p. 99.



- <sup>77</sup>Pound, Literary Essays, pp. 214-5.
- <sup>78</sup>Lewis, Blast 1, p. 149.
- <sup>79</sup>Lewis, Blast 1, p. 154.
- <sup>80</sup>Pound, Gaudier-Brzeska, p. 92.
- <sup>81</sup>Lewis, Blast 1, p. 149.
- <sup>82</sup>Pound, Blast 1, p. 154.
- <sup>83</sup>Pound, Gaudier-Brzeska, p. 90.
- <sup>84</sup>Lewis, Blast 1, p. 25.
- <sup>85</sup>Rothstein, Modern English Painters: Lewis to Moore, p. 25.
- <sup>86</sup>Walter Michel, "Vorticism and the Early Wyndham Lewis," Apollo (Jan., 1963), p. 6.
- <sup>87</sup>Pound, Gaudier-Brzeska, p. 20.
- <sup>88</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 98.
- <sup>89</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 88.
- <sup>90</sup>Pound, Blast 1, p. 154.
- <sup>91</sup>Pound, Gaudier-Brzeska, p. 89.
- <sup>92</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 85.
- <sup>93</sup>Lewis, Blast 1, pp. 67-8.
- <sup>94</sup>Lewis, Blast 2, p. 43.
- <sup>95</sup>Lewis, Blast 2, p. 38.
- <sup>96</sup>C. Handley Read, The Art of Wyndham Lewis (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), pp. 52-3.
- <sup>97</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 53.





- <sup>98</sup>Pound, Gaudier-Brzeska, p. 93.
- <sup>99</sup>Pound, Blast 2, p. 19.
- <sup>100</sup>Pound, Gaudier-Brzeska, p. 138.
- <sup>101</sup>Lewis, Blast 1, pp. 134-5.
- <sup>102</sup>Lewis, Blast 2, p. 41.
- <sup>103</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 39.
- <sup>104</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 41.
- <sup>105</sup>Quoted in Peter Selz, German Expressionist Painting (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press), p. 206.
- <sup>106</sup>Edward Wadsworth, Blast 1, p. 119.
- <sup>107</sup>Julia and Lyonel Feininger, "Wassily Kandinsky," in W. Kandinsky, Concerning the Spiritual in Art (New York: George Wittenborn, 1964), p. 14.
- <sup>108</sup>Reprinted in Pound, Gaudier-Brzeska, p. 33.
- <sup>109</sup>Lewis, Blast 2, p. 40.
- <sup>110</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 43.
- <sup>111</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 45.
- <sup>112</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 42.
- <sup>113</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 40.
- <sup>114</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 38.
- <sup>115</sup>John Rothenstein claims that the war was not responsible for the demise of the Rebel Art Centre: "Unlike many other projects undertaken in 1914, the Rebel Art Centre was not extinguished by the war. . . . It came to an end, principally because it was unable to withstand the stresses imposed upon it by the possessiveness and suspiciousness of Lewis. . . . Its activities, effectively pub-



lished, gave it and Lewis much prominence, but it accomplished little. . . . Its teaching activities were restricted, for only two students presented themselves for instruction: a man who wished to improve the design of gas-brackets and a lady pornographer." Modern English Painters: Lewis to Moore, p. 29.

<sup>116</sup>Pound, Letters, p. 82.

<sup>117</sup>Lewis, Wyndham Lewis the Artist: From Blast to Burlington House (London: Laidlaw & Laidlaw), p. 69.

<sup>118</sup>Pound, Letter to John Quinn, 10 March, 1916, Letters, pp. 121-2.

<sup>119</sup>Pound, Letter to Harriet Monroe, 13 August, 1913, Letters, p. 58.

<sup>120</sup>Pound, Gaudier-Brzeska, p. 124.

<sup>121</sup>Pound, Letter to Margaret Anderson, (?Jan. 1917), Letters, p. 160.

<sup>122</sup>Pound, "Editorial," The Little Review 4.1 (May, 1917), p. 3.

<sup>123</sup>Pound, Letter to Edgar Jepson, 29 May, 1917, The Letters, p. 167.

<sup>124</sup>Gernsheim, Helmut & Alison, eds. Alvin Langdon Coburn Photographer (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), p. 102.

<sup>125</sup>Pound, Payannes and Divisions (New York: Knopf, 1918), p. 252.

<sup>126</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 254.

<sup>127</sup>Pound, letter to John Quinn, 24 January 1917, The Letters, p. 158.

<sup>128</sup>Pound, Pavannes and Divisions, p. 254.

<sup>129</sup>Lewis, letter to John Quinn, 3 September 1919, The Letters, p. 111.





<sup>130</sup> Ibid., pp. 110-11.

<sup>131</sup> Pound, letter to Wyndham Lewis, 27 April, 1921, Letters, p. 230.

<sup>132</sup> Pound, letter to James Joyce, 2 January, 1927, Letters, p. 281.

<sup>133</sup> W. Roberts, "The Resurrection of Vorticism and the Apotheosis of Wyndham Lewis," [2].

<sup>134</sup> Lewis, introduction to the catalogue of the exhibition Wyndham Lewis and Vorticism, Tate Gallery, 1956, p. 3.

<sup>135</sup> Lewis, "What Art Now?", The English Review, vol. 28 (April, 1919), p. 334.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., p. 335.

<sup>137</sup> Lewis, Rude Assignment, p. 129.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>139</sup> Lewis, Blast 2, p. 46.

<sup>140</sup> Jacob Epstein, Let There Be Sculpture (London: Michael Joseph, 1940), pp. 70-1.

<sup>141</sup> Nevinson, Paint and Prejudice, p. 122.

<sup>142</sup> Rothenstein, Modern English Painters: Lewis to Moore, pp. 141-2.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., pp. 153-4.

<sup>144</sup> Ronald Alley, introduction to the Catalogue of the William Roberts Retrospective Exhibition, Tate Gallery, 1965, pp. 7-8.

<sup>145</sup> Lewis, Rude Assignment, p. 125.

<sup>146</sup> Lewis, "Plain Home-Builder: Where is your Vorticist?" The Architectural Review 76.456 (Nov. 1934), p. 156.



<sup>147</sup> Lewis, letter to the editor of "Partisan Review" [ca. April, 1949], Letters, p. 492.

<sup>148</sup> Lewis, Introduction to the Catalogue of the exhibition, "Wyndham Lewis and Vorticism," Tate Gallery, 1956. William Roberts commented on this statement at the time in "The Resurrection of Vorticism and the Apotheosis of Wyndham Lewis at the Tate": "In 1913, at the start of his career as a painter, Lewis had no wish to stand alone; far from it, for his ambitions, and the fashions of the times, made it expedient that he should be part of a Group. With cubistic and futuristic groups operating on the continent, something similar had to be done in England.

Casting his eyes around Lewis found (perhaps to his surprise) that there were other artists in London as well producing work inspired by Picasso and the painting being done in Paris. In no time at all, from among these experimenters, a Group was got together. With Ezra Pound officiating at the ceremony the Group was christened Vorticist."

<sup>149</sup> Lewis, Blasting and Bombardiering, pp. 254-5.

<sup>150</sup> Lewis, The Writer and the Absolute (London: Methuen, 1952), p. 43.

<sup>151</sup> Lewis, Blasting and Bombardiering, p. 4.

<sup>152</sup> Lewis, Paleface (London: Chatto & Windus, 1929), p. 108.

<sup>153</sup> Lewis, Wyndham Lewis the Artist, p. 18.

<sup>154</sup> Lewis, The Writer and the Absolute, p. 42.

<sup>155</sup> Canto 7, p. 31.

<sup>156</sup> Canto 20, pp. 95-6.

<sup>157</sup> Canto 74, p. 460.

<sup>158</sup> Pound, "D'Artagnan Twenty Years After," p. 611.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 612.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 610.





<sup>161</sup>Canto 78, p. 510.

<sup>162</sup>Canto 76, p. 481.

<sup>163</sup>Pound, "Epstein, Belgion and Meaning," The Criterion 9.36 (April, 1930), p. 471.

<sup>164</sup>Canto 102, Thrones 96-109 de los cantares (New York: New Directions, 1959), p. 80.

<sup>165</sup>Canto 7, p. 30.

<sup>166</sup>Canto 29, p. 148.

<sup>167</sup>Canto 25, p. 123.

<sup>168</sup>Pound, "Paris Letter," The Dial 74.1 (January, 1923), pp. 88-9.

<sup>169</sup>Canto 8, p. 32.

<sup>170</sup>Canto 3, p. 16.

<sup>171</sup>Canto 25, p. 124.

<sup>172</sup>Canto 26, p. 132.

<sup>173</sup>Canto 74, p. 451.

<sup>174</sup>Canto 74, p. 457.

<sup>175</sup>Canto 90, Section: Rock Drill 85-95 de los cantares (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), pp. 67-8.

## Part Two--Within the Vortex

<sup>1</sup>Pound, Blast 1, p. 154.

<sup>2</sup>What Pater said was "all art constantly aspires toward the condition of music," The Renaissance (New York: Mentor, 1959), p. 95.



<sup>3</sup>Pater, The Renaissance, p. 94.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>6</sup>Quoted in Pound, Gaudier-Brzeska, p. 120.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 122.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 125. Later Pound notes that the use of the analogy of the musical chord as a means of describing the arrangement of forms that the vorticists were seeking was inappropriate. The vorticists were concerned with "single sounds produced by multiple impact; as distinct from chords, which are sort of chains or slushes of sound." ("George Antheil," Criterion 2.7 [April, 1924], p. 331.)

<sup>9</sup>Preface to the Catalogue of the Exhibition, "Wyndham Lewis and Vorticism," Tate Gallery, 1956, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup>Kandinsky, Concerning the Spiritual in Art (New York: George Wittenborn, 1964), p. 43.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 24-5.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>15</sup>Gaudier-Brzeska, Blast 2, p. 34.

<sup>16</sup>Lewis, letter to Charles Handley-Read, 2 September, 1949, The Letters, pp. 504-5.

<sup>17</sup>Pound, The Spirit of Romance, p. 14.

<sup>18</sup>Pound, Literary Essays, p. 51.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 9.





<sup>20</sup>Pound, Gaudier-Brzeska, p. 86.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 92.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>23</sup>Kandinsky, Concerning the Spiritual in Art, p. 24.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>25</sup>Eliot, Selected Essays, p. 145. Eliot elsewhere suggests that the poem is an ontological structure distinct from the original personal impulse that informs it, and unlike Pound and Kandinsky, claims that the process of expression and communication is discontinuous: "We can only say that a poem, in some sense, has its own life; that its parts form something quite different from a body of neatly ordered biographical data; that the feeling, or emotion, or vision, resulting from the poem is something different from the feeling or emotion or vision in the mind of the poet."

<sup>26</sup>Pound, The Spirit of Romance, p. 128.

<sup>27</sup>Hulme, Speculations, p. 240.

<sup>28</sup>Gleizes and Metzinger, "Cubism," in Modern Artists on Art, ed. R. L. Herbert (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964), p. 14.

<sup>29</sup>Pound, Literary Essays, p. 431.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 267.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>33</sup>Pound, Gaudier-Brzeska, p. 86.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 84, 86.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 120-1.



- <sup>36</sup> Lewis, Paleface (London: Chatto & Windus, 1929), p. 100.
- <sup>37</sup> Pound, Gaudier-Brzeska, p. 89.
- <sup>38</sup> Worringer, Abstraction and Empathy (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953), p. vii.
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.
- <sup>40</sup> Kandinsky, Concerning the Spiritual in Art, p. 24.
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.
- <sup>42</sup> Guillaume Apollinaire, The Cubist Painters (New York: George Wittenborn, 1962), p. 17.
- <sup>43</sup> Pound, "As for Imagisme," The New Age 16.13 (January 28, 1915), p. 350.
- <sup>44</sup> Pound, Gaudier-Brzeska, pp. 89-90.
- <sup>45</sup> Lewis, The Caliph's Design (London: The Egoist Ltd., 1919), p. 63.
- <sup>46</sup> Pound, Gaudier-Brzeska, p. 24.
- <sup>47</sup> Lewis, Blast 2, p. 78. Lewis later on occasion associates the rock-drill with the revolutionary "engine of political destruction" (Paleface, p. 242). Jacob Epstein himself came to regard his "Rock-Drill" with some repulsion. He states in Let There Be Sculpture that "it was in the experimental pre-war days of 1913 that I was fired to do the rock-drill, and my ardour for machinery (short-lived) expended itself upon the purchase of an actual drill, second-hand, and upon this I made and mounted a machine-like robot, visored, menacing, and carrying within itself its progeny, protectively ensconced. Here is the armed, sinister figure of to-day and to-morrow. No humanity, only the terrible frankenstein's monster we have made ourselves into" (p. 70).
- <sup>48</sup> Pound, Gaudier-Brzeska, p. 31.
- <sup>49</sup> Kandinsky, Concerning the Spiritual in Art, p. 77.





<sup>50</sup>Gleizes and Metzinger, "Cubism" in Modern Artists on Art, p. 3.

<sup>51</sup>Lewis, Blast 2, p. 44.

<sup>52</sup>Canto 94, p. 94.

<sup>53</sup>Canto 104, p. 93.

<sup>54</sup>Pound, Selected Poems (London: Faber and Faber, 1956), p. 185.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 186.

<sup>56</sup>Pound, "Vorticism," The New Age 16.11 (14 January, 1915), p. 278.

<sup>57</sup>Canto 20, p. 97.

<sup>58</sup>Canto 29, p. 149.

<sup>59</sup>Canto 37, p. 191.

<sup>60</sup>Canto 51, p. 262.

<sup>61</sup>Canto 9, p. 45.

<sup>62</sup>Lewis, Blast 1, p. 61.

<sup>63</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>64</sup>Pound, Polite Essays, p. 51.

<sup>65</sup>Gleizes and Metzinger, "Cubism," in Modern Artists on Art, p. 15.

<sup>66</sup>Lewis, Blast 2, p. 91.

<sup>67</sup>Pound, Gaudier-Brzeska, p. 85.

<sup>68</sup>Paleface, p. 108.



<sup>69</sup>Gleizes and Metzinger, "Cubism," in Modern Artists on Art, p. 13.

<sup>70</sup>Lewis, Blast 1, p. 135.

<sup>71</sup>Lewis, The Diabolical Principle and the Dithyrambic Spectator (London: Chatto and Windus, 1931), p. 66.

<sup>72</sup>Pound, Gaudier-Brzeska, p. 89.

<sup>73</sup>Pound, Literary Essays, p. 267.

<sup>74</sup>Gleizes and Metzinger, "Cubism," in Modern Artists on Art, p. 15.

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>76</sup>Joyce, Stephen Hero (London: The New English Library, 1966), p. 216.

<sup>77</sup>Lewis, Blast 1, p. 39.

<sup>78</sup>Pound, Literary Essays, p. 178.

<sup>79</sup>Canto 83, p. 570.

<sup>80</sup>Kandinsky, Concerning the Spiritual in Art, p. 39.

<sup>81</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>84</sup>Hulme, Speculations, p. 96.

<sup>85</sup>Lewis, The Caliph's Design, p. 30.

<sup>86</sup>Lewis, Blast 2, p. 45.

<sup>87</sup>Lewis, Blast 1, p. 148.





- <sup>88</sup>Lewis, Wyndham Lewis the Artist, p. 78.
- <sup>89</sup>Lewis, introduction to the Catalogue of the Exhibition, "Wyndham Lewis and Vorticism," Tate Gallery, 1956, pp. 3-4.
- <sup>90</sup>Hulme, Speculations, p. 104.
- <sup>91</sup>Ibid., p. 105.
- <sup>92</sup>Pound, Gaudier-Brzeska, p. 116.
- <sup>93</sup>Hulme, Speculations, p. 104.
- <sup>94</sup>Pound, "George Antheil," p. 326.
- <sup>95</sup>Reprinted in Clough, Futurism, p. 43.
- <sup>96</sup>Lewis, Tyro 2, p. 35.
- <sup>97</sup>Lewis, The Caliph's Design, p. 29.
- <sup>98</sup>Lewis, Wyndham Lewis the Artist, pp. 79-80.
- <sup>99</sup>Lewis, The Caliph's Design, p. 29.
- <sup>100</sup>Pound, "George Antheil," p. 325.
- <sup>101</sup>Ibid., p. 326.
- <sup>102</sup>Ibid., p. 325.
- <sup>103</sup>Joyce, Finnegans Wake (New York: The Viking Press), p. 613.
- <sup>104</sup>Lewis, "Creatures of Habit and Creatures of Change," The Calendar of Modern Letters 3.1 (April, 1927), p. 29.
- <sup>105</sup>Gleizes and Metzinger, "Cubism," in Modern Artists on Art, p. 18.
- <sup>106</sup>Lewis, Blast 2, p. 39.



<sup>107</sup>Lewis, "Plain Home-Builder: Where is your Vorticist?", The Architectural Review 76.456 (November, 1934), p. 156.

<sup>108</sup>Lewis, Blasting and Bombardiering, pp. 260-1.

<sup>109</sup>Kandinsky, Concerning the Spiritual in Art, p. 34.

<sup>110</sup>Eliot, To Criticize the Critic (London: Faber and Faber), p. 170.

<sup>111</sup>Canto 77, p. 498.

<sup>112</sup>What Pound calls the Ching Ming idograph which makes its first appearance at the end of Canto 51, p. 263.

<sup>113</sup>Pound, Active Anthology, p. 254.

<sup>114</sup>Pound, A Visiting Card, p. 23.

<sup>115</sup>Canto 52, p. 270.

<sup>116</sup>E. H. Gombrich, Art and Illusion (London: Phaidon Press, 1962), p. 280.

<sup>117</sup>Rebecca West, "Imagism," The New Freewoman 1.5 (August 15, 1913), p. 86.

<sup>118</sup>Hulme, like Kandinsky in his formulation of the keyboard theory, also appears to regard the reader as the only "material" involved: "Just as Aristotle asserts that Matter the unlimited contains Forms embedded in it, and that they are not thrust upon it from some ideal world, so all the effects that can be produced by the literary man. . . are to be found dormant, unused in the reader, and are thus awakened.

The new art of the Reader. . . Sympathy with reader as brother, as unexpressed author. ("Notes on Language and Style," reprinted in Roberts, T. E. Hulme [London: Faber and Faber, 1938], p. 294.)

<sup>119</sup>Lewis, Blast 1, p. 7.

<sup>120</sup>Lewis, Paleface, pp. 250-1.





<sup>121</sup>Ibid., p. 252.

<sup>122</sup>Lewis, "Creatures of Habit and Creatures of Change," p. 29.

<sup>123</sup>Pound, letter to John Quinn, 10 Marc, 1916, The Letters, p. 122.

<sup>124</sup>Canto 25, pp. 122-3.

<sup>125</sup>Hulme, "A Lecture on Modern Poetry," Appendix 2 in Roberts, T. E. Hulme, pp. 269-70.

<sup>126</sup>Mervyn Levy, "Introduction," Gaudier-Brzeska Drawings and Sculpture (London: Cory, Adams & Mackay, 1965), p. 14. Pound describes this kind of sculpture as "peculiarly a thing of the twentieth-century. . . . Sculpture, of this new sort, Epstein's, Brzeska's, is perhaps even more moving than painting simply because there has been for centuries no sculpture that one could take very seriously. There was the early work of Rodin, a beginning. But with that partial exception we must go back to the pychrome portrait effigies of the early renaissance, or to the medals of that period, before we discover anything that can move us. It is therefore exciting and interesting to find Epstein and Brzeska doing work that will bear comparison with the head of "An officer of rank" (of the XVII to XVIII dynasty); with Egyptian stone and with the early Chinese bronzes," (Gaudier-Brzeska, p. 29).

<sup>127</sup>Lewis, The Art of Being Ruled (London: Chatto & Windus, 1926), p. 403.

<sup>128</sup>Lewis, Men without Art, p. 115.

<sup>129</sup>Hugh Kenner, The Poetry of Ezra Pound, and Donald Davie, The Poet as Sculptor (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), passim.

<sup>130</sup>Canto 74, p. 457.

<sup>131</sup>Pound, Gaudier-Brzeska, p. 110.

<sup>132</sup>Ibid., p. 26.



- 133 Ibid., p. 145.
- 134 Ibid., p. 133.
- 135 Stanley Casson, Some Modern Sculptors (London: Oxford University Press, 1929), p. 95.
- 136 Hulme, Speculations, p. 107.
- 137 Pound, "As for Imagisme," The New Age 16.13 (January 28, 1915), p. 349.
- 138 Pound, Gaudier-Brzeska, p. 142.
- 139 Lewis, Blast 2, p. 40.
- 140 Ibid., p. 45.
- 141 Pound, The Unwobbling Pivot (Washington, D. C.: Square Dollar Series, n. d.), p. 14.
- 142 Eric Newton, "Wyndham Lewis," in Charles Handley-Read, ed., The Art of Wyndham Lewis, p. 21.
- 143 Pound, "Vorticism," The New Age 16.11 (14 January, 1915), p. 277.
- 144 Lewis, Blast 2, p. 78.
- 145 Lewis, Blast 1, p. 140.
- 146 Pound, Literary Essays, p. 154.
- 147 Canto 74, p. 477.
- 148 Canto 76, p. 485.
- 149 Pound, Gaudier-Brzeska, p. 137-8
- 150 Pound, Canto 77, p. 498.
- 151 Canto 83, p. 564.





<sup>152</sup>Canto 99, p. 61.

<sup>153</sup>Canto 40, p. 209.

<sup>154</sup>Pound, Guide to Kulchur, p. 44.

<sup>155</sup>Liou Kia hway, "The Configuration of Chinese Reasoning," diogenes 49 (Spring 1965), p. 67: "The concrete and indivisible whole. . . is not a mathematical whole but something experienced and elaborated by early Chinese philosophers. . . . It is not a logically organized whole, a whole whose parts follow one another and in which chance represents only an imperfect knowledge of man, who is unable to embrace the whole in its constituent parts; it is not even entirely the whole whose parts are inextricably interdependent and in which each part somehow comprises the other parts. It is, rather, the original whole, the sum of all parts, which makes each concrete part and all the other equally concrete parts possible, a sum total the adequate experience of which entirely escapes man's understanding in its human potentialities."

<sup>156</sup>Pound, The Unwobbling Pivot, p. 24. Pound is later to find two forces in history "one that divides, shatters and kills, and one that contemplates the unity of the mystery" ("A Visiting Card," p. 7). Karl Popper has noted that "the conspiracy theory of ignorance" tends to appear as a "curious outgrowth from the doctrine of manifest truth" in order that the patent lack of truth manifesting itself in the immediate human environment may be explained--a process that is, during one period, readily apparent in Pound's work. (Karl Popper, "On the Sources of Knowledge and Ignorance," Encounter 19.3 (September, 1962), p. 44.)

<sup>157</sup>"I Gather the Limbs of Osiris. VI On Virtue," The New Age 10.10 (4 January, 1912), p. 224.

<sup>158</sup>Pound, Guide to Kulchur, p. 74. Lewis in Time and Western Man and Eliot in "Leibniz's Monads and Bradley's Finite Centers" (The Monist 26 (1916), pp. 566-76) have also looked at Leibniz's system, Lewis with critical interest and Eliot with a certain amount of dismay.

<sup>159</sup>Canto 74, p. 459



- <sup>160</sup>Canto 25, p.124.
- <sup>161</sup>Canto 87, pp.32-3. Pound, in a letter to Lawrence Binyon, 6 March, 1934 (Letters, p.340), indicates the source of the opening phrase: "I wonder if you are using (in lectures) a statement I remember your making in talk, but not so far as I recall, in print. "Slowness is beauty," which struck me as very odd in 1908 (when I certainly did not believe it) and has stayed with me ever since."
- <sup>162</sup>Pound, Guide to Kulchur, p.152.
- <sup>163</sup>Donald Davie, The Poet as Sculptor, p.128.
- <sup>164</sup>Clough, Futurism, p.96.
- <sup>165</sup>Alexander Calder, Abstraction, Creation, quoted in Carola Giedion-Welcker, Contemporary Sculpture (London: Faber and Faber, 1961), p.208.
- <sup>166</sup>W. George, Expressionism (London: Thames and Hudson, 1960), p.33.
- <sup>167</sup>Lewis, One-Way Song (London: Methuen, 1933), p.27.
- <sup>168</sup>Lewis, Rude Assignment, p.193.
- <sup>169</sup>Hulme, Speculations, p.3.
- <sup>170</sup>Lewis, The Art of Being Ruled, p.31.
- <sup>171</sup>Lewis, Paleface, p.83.
- <sup>172</sup>Lewis, Rude Assignment, p.155.
- <sup>173</sup>Joyce, Finnegans Wake, p.162.
- <sup>174</sup>Canto 102, p.80.
- <sup>175</sup>Lewis, Blast 2, p.44.
- <sup>176</sup>Lewis, The Demon of Progress in the Arts (London: Methuen, 1955), p.3.



The first of these is the fact that the number of cases of smallpox in 1870 was 1,000, while in 1871 it was 1,500. This is a very large increase, and it is not likely that it is due to any other cause than the fact that the disease is more prevalent in the latter year.

## Smallpox in 1870 and 1871

The following table shows the number of cases of smallpox in 1870 and 1871.

1870 1,000 cases

1871 1,500 cases

The following table shows the number of cases of smallpox in 1870 and 1871.

1870 1,000 cases

1871 1,500 cases

1870 1,000 cases

1871 1,500 cases

1870 1,000 cases

1871 1,500 cases

1870 1,000 cases

1871 1,500 cases

1870 1,000 cases

The following table shows the number of cases of smallpox in 1870 and 1871.

- 177 Lewis, Time and Western Man, p. 176.
- 178 Ibid., p. 176.
- 179 Lewis, Paleface, p. 251.
- 180 Lewis, Time and Western Man, p. 26.
- 181 Lewis, Paleface, p. 254.
- 182 Lewis, Men without Art, p. 128.
- 183 Canto 81, p. 556.
- 184 Pound, Literary Essays, p. 26.
- 185 Pound, "George Antheil," The Criterion 2. 7 (April, 1924), pp. 321-2.
- 186 Canto 27, p. 136.
- 187 Pound, ABC of Reading (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p. 202.
- 188 Pound, "George Antheil," p. 324.
- 189 Canto 85, p. 3.
- 190 Guillaume Apollinaire, The Cubist Painters, p. 45.
- 191 Pound, "Review of Jean Cocteau, Poésies, 1917, 1920," The Dial 70.1 (January, 1921), p. 110.
- 192 Pound, "Epstein, Belgion and Meaning," p. 475.
- 193 Pound, letter to George Santayana, 16 January, 1940, Letters, p. 430.
- 194 Pound, ABC of Reading, p. 19.
- 195 Pound, letter to Mary Bernard, 13 August, 1934, Letters, p. 346.



- 196 Pound, "D'Artagnan and After," p. 607.
- 197 Fenollosa, Essay on the Chinese Written Character, p. 60.
- 198 Pound, "George Antheil," p. 331.
- 199 Pound, Patria Mia and The Treatise on Harmony, p. 81.
- 200 Ibid., p. 84.
- 201 Pound, "George Antheil," p. 323.
- 202 Pound, Patria Mia and The Treatise on Harmony, p. 90.
- 203 Pound, "George Antheil," p. 324.
- 204 Pound, "George Antheil," p. 324.
- 205 Ibid., p. 331.
- 206 Stanley Casson, Some Modern Sculptors, p. 97.
- 207 C. Handley-Read, ed., The Art of Wyndham Lewis, pp. 60-1.
- 208 J. Rothenstein, Modern English Painters: From Lewis to Moore, p. 36.
- 209 In Pound, Gaudier-Brzeska, p. 32.
- 210 Pound, Preface to his translation of the Cavalcanti Poems, reprinted in The Translations of Ezra Pound (New York: New Directions, n.d.), p. 24.
- 211 Canto 76, p. 485.
- 212 Pound, "Epstein, Belgion and Meaning," p. 475.
- 213 Pound, The ABC of Reading, p. 29.
- 214 Joyce, letter to Miss Harriet Weaver, April 16, 1927, reprinted in R. Ellmann, James Joyce (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 609.





- <sup>215</sup>Blast 2, p. 44.
- <sup>216</sup>Lewis, The Childermass (London: John Calder, 1965), p. 11.
- <sup>217</sup>Joyce, Finnegans Wake, p. 184.
- <sup>218</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 115.
- <sup>219</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 157.
- <sup>220</sup>Pound, A Lume Spento (London: Faber and Faber, 1965), p. 56.
- <sup>221</sup>In Pound, Gaudier-Brzeska, p. 22.
- <sup>222</sup>Pound, Gaudier-Brzeska, p. 92.
- <sup>223</sup>Lewis, Blast 2, p. 38.
- <sup>224</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 39.
- <sup>225</sup>Lewis, Blast 1, p. 61.
- <sup>226</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 62, 64.
- <sup>227</sup>Pound, Preface to his translation of the Cavalcanti poems, in The Translations of Ezra Pound, p. 23.
- <sup>228</sup>Pound, Literary Essays, p. 49.
- <sup>229</sup>Canto 4, p. 19.
- <sup>230</sup>Pound, Guide to Kulchur, p. 152.
- <sup>231</sup>Pound, "I Gather the Limbs of Osiris," The New Age 10.6 (December 7, 1911), p. 30.
- <sup>232</sup>Pound, Impact, p. 58. Cf. Allen Upward's description in The Divine Mystery of genius as "like the slender wire that rises from a receiving station to catch the unseen message that comes across the sea from a strange continent." Pound reviewed this book in November, 1913, and described it as "the most fascinating book on folk-lore that I have ever opened." (The New Freewoman 1.11 (November 15, 1913), p. 207.)



- <sup>233</sup> Pound, ABC of Reading, p. 28.
- <sup>234</sup> Pound, "Antheil, 1924-26," The Criterion 4.4 (October, 1926), p. 698.
- <sup>235</sup> Pound, "George Antheil," p. 324.
- <sup>236</sup> Pound, Preface to Cavalcanti Poems, The Translations of Ezra Pound, p. 18.
- <sup>237</sup> Pound, Literary Essays, p. 154.
- <sup>238</sup> Ibid., pp. 154-5.
- <sup>239</sup> Pound, Guide to Kulchur, p. 75.
- <sup>240</sup> Canto 82, p. 566.
- <sup>241</sup> Canto 47, p. 246.
- <sup>242</sup> Canto 4, p. 19.
- <sup>243</sup> Canto 23, p. 114.
- <sup>245</sup> Pound, Guide to Kulchur, p. 77.
- <sup>246</sup> Pound, The Unwobbling Pivot, p. 5.
- <sup>247</sup> Ibid., p. 4.
- <sup>248</sup> Canto 99, p. 61.
- <sup>249</sup> A. Ozenfant, The Foundations of Modern Art (New York: Dover Publications, 1952), p. 8.
- <sup>250</sup> Stanley Hayter, "Kandinsky," in Kandinsky Concerning the Spiritual in Art, p. 17.
- <sup>251</sup> Henry James, "Preface to The Wings of the Dove," The Art of the Novel. Critical Prefaces (New York: Charles Scribner, n. d.), pp. 294-6.





<sup>252</sup>Eliot, "Gerontian," in The Complete Poems and Plays (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1952), p. 23.

<sup>253</sup>D. H. Lawrence, Kangaroo, quoted in The Modern Age, ed. B. Ford (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1964), p. 21.

<sup>254</sup>Canto 15, p. 70.

<sup>255</sup>Georges Lemaitre, From Cubism to Surrealism in French Literature, pp. 210-11.

<sup>256</sup>Canto 27, p. 135.

<sup>257</sup>Canto 74, p. 474.



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